HOW TO TEACH AND LEARN

MODERN LANGUAGES

SUCCESSFULLY,

ESPECIALLY FRENCH, AND ITS TEACHING AT SCHOOL.

BY

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INTRODUCTION.

ASPIRATION to authorship appears to have been a very common malady among professors of modern languages, especially among professors of the French language; for, on examining catalogues of educational works, one cannot help being struck with the amazing number of books produced by them. There exist innumerable grammars, scientific as well as elementary; the list of books intended to teach conversation is truly bewildering. In it we find Ollendorf's and Otto's Conversational Methods, associated with somebody's 'Deux Perroquets' and De Porquet's 'Speaking Fables;' there are reading-books containing 'French Classics'

for advanced readers, and others intended to teach 'French at Sight,' which, of course, are intended for beginners. The learned professors have not spared either age, sex, or condition; and to their ingenuity we owe 'Manuals for Travellers,' 'The First Step of the Child in French,' 'Guides Français pour les jeunes Filles,' 'La petite Institutrice,' 'Le petit Fablier,' 'Household French,' 'Self-Interpreters,' etc. Even poor Father Time has been encroached upon, as there exist compilations which profess to teach French in nine or six months, and there are many adventurous individuals who undertake to teach it in even less than that time.

Judging from the great variety and number of these publications, almost every professor of some standing must have contrived to swell the list with a book of his own. Anyhow, we must give them credit for having eclipsed, in point of profusion, every other branch of education. But what is most to be wondered at is, that their tremendous

efforts have not produced corresponding results, and that every Englishman has not long ago become a perfect French scholar.

I confess my weakness. I also had determined to write a grammar—a grammar that should throw into the shade everything that had been previously achieved—but the sight of the voluminous catalogue disheartened me; in short, it convinced me that success in that line was impossible. I threw my pen away in despair. But, on examining the list of French works once more, an idea occurred to me, whether a good one or no, I leave to others to decide. Finding that books which give practical hints as to the method of teaching modern languages are not to be found in the said catalogue, I determined upon supplying that want by giving, in the present little volume, my own experience, not only in teaching, but also in learning several languages, and pointing out in this manner, to teachers and students, how to teach, and how to learn modern languages.

In my opinion, teachers, as well as students —but much more so the former—have committed a grave mistake in attaching too much importance to handbooks; and, whenever the result of their labours did not realise the expectations they entertained, the unfortunate handbook was made the scapegoat, whilst the fault lay really with the master's defective method of teaching, and the student's inattention and idleness in appropriating the contents of the book.

F. LICHTENBERGER.

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ERRATA.

Page 5, *line* 3. Instead of 'their clerks and foreign masters,' read: 'their foreign clerks and masters.'

Page 141, *line* 6. Instead of 'synonymies,' read: 'synonymes.'

HOW TO TEACH AND LEARN
MODERN LANGUAGES
SUCCESSFULLY.

IMPORTANCE
OF THE STUDY OF MODERN LANGUAGES.

I DO not think it necessary to demonstrate the usefulness and importance of an earnest study of modern languages by giving many reasons, as, for instance, how it would enlarge the mind and store it with new ideas; how it would make travelling ever so much more pleasant and instructive; how it would further the acquaintance of different nationalities with each other, and promote friendly relations between them, as merchants and tourists, who represent the most influential classes of the English nation, know but too well from their

own experience what a boon the possession of a modern language is.

No doubt the dearly-bought experience of those amongst us who are compelled to deal with foreign nations, or, from other reasons, are brought into contact with them, is the reason why, in England as well as among several Continental nations, it has been for some time admitted that a thorough knowledge of foreign languages should be considered as important a portion of a liberal education as an acquaintance with history and geography.

The admission that the acquisition of modern languages, especially French, is of the utmost importance to Englishmen, we find practically illustrated by the fact that, in good grammar and boarding schools, most of the pupils learn French. In more recent times, German, and, perhaps, Spanish, have received our attention; but, for various reasons, an acquaintance with French is considered an almost indispensable accomplishment.

The following fact will show how important a thorough knowledge of modern languages

would be to the middle classes. Some time ago, a number of letters, emanating principally from clerks in merchants' offices, appeared in one of the principal newspapers, under the head of '*Marriage and Celibacy.*' The leading theme in these pitiful letters was that England, being overstocked with men in search of employment, nothing but emigration remained to the middle classes in order to better their condition. One of the principal reasons which the authors of these letters brought forward to prove the hopelessness of making a successful fight for a respectable position in England, was the irresistible invasion of England by foreigners, who, with the advantage of their own languages, would carry the best places in our merchants' offices; many amongst them, even, would work for a mere nothing. There is, indeed, some ground for their complaining of the pushing foreigners, for the number of those who make a good income as correspondents and teachers of languages, in England, is amazing. Strange to say that no one should have thought of advising the 'ingenious' authors of those despairing and silly epistles to try and wrest

from the foreign invader those lucrative positions. I have not the slightest doubt that they would be able to do so, were they but possessed of the courage and perseverance of their patient foreign rivals.

Until some twenty years ago, music was considered quite as foreign a plant to English soil as French and German. It was thought there was no music among the English, hence foreign music-masters were quite the rage. The case is somewhat different now; and I have no hesitation in saying that, in the end, the foreign music-masters will not only find successful competitors in Englishmen, but will be finally driven by them into a corner.

Now what has been accomplished by Englishmen in music, might, with the greatest ease, be done with regard to foreign languages. For music requires talent, unceasing drudgery and application for many years; whilst languages, as I shall show in another chapter, demand only earnest application for a few years, and mental capabilities of no very exalted order.

And how glad English merchants, and the

better class of head-masters would be, could they find Englishmen to take the places of their clerks and foreign masters!

THE RESULT

OF THE STUDY OF MODERN LANGUAGES.

THOUGH public opinion has almost unanimously agreed upon the necessity and importance of the study of modern languages; and, although they are '*taught by the most distinguished and efficient native masters, and continually spoken in our boarding schools,*' desirable results are not obtained. Comparatively few of the pupils acquire what may be considered a fair knowledge of the subject; and it is to be lamented, that, after years of tedious and expensive study, the pupil, when confronted by a person well acquainted with the subject, admits by his silence, or a '*Je ne sais pas,*' and '*Ich weiss nicht,*' that he has not learnt very much. In most cases he has not acquired a knowledge sound enough to serve as a foundation, should he wish to con-

tinue his studies at a riper age. In some cases it is so bad as to prove an obstacle to further studies, an obstacle which only energetic masters and pupils can overcome.

When we now compare the importance which is attached to such accomplishments, and the sacrifices of time and money which are made in acquiring them, with the scanty, not to say miserable, results which the study of modern languages has yielded, is it not quite natural that we should seek for an explanation of that tremendous disproportion between effort and result, and ask why so vast a proportion of the students fail in their attempts? Are the difficulties that beset the task so great, or is the acquisition of a foreign language beyond the capabilities of an Englishman's mind and tongue?

I will try to answer these questions in the following paragraphs.

DIFFICULTIES

OF THE STUDY OF MODERN LANGUAGES.

No doubt the difficulties which beset the study of modern languages are very great, as many who have successfully undertaken the task will know. Indeed, to speak a foreign tongue with a pure accent, to write it like a well-educated native, and also to think in it, are only reserved to a fortunate few endowed with special gifts. A sharp, quick ear that knows how to distinguish between the finest shades of sound, a ready, supple tongue, a never-failing memory, and a clear-sighted and penetrating intellect are required for such a success as, for instance, the late Charles Mathews achieved. In short, to master a language in its whole extent, to get hold of its peculiar character—of the spirit that breathes in the very heart of it—talent, nay, genius, is necessary.

But to study a modern language to such an extent as to make it useful for business and tourist purposes, to understand it when spoken, and to make one's self understood in it, is not

a task of exceptional difficulty. As it is more a matter of a good memory, and earnest, steadfast application and energy, taste and liking, rather than talent, even persons of moderate abilities, but with an earnest desire to learn, cannot help succeeding in their endeavours to accomplish it, under the guidance of a good and conscientious teacher. The difficulties which the task presents have been, however, by a variety of circumstances magnified to such an extent that they have assumed so formidable an aspect in the eyes of English people, which has caused learners to arrive at the conclusion that the task of surmounting them is an impossibility.

Do the Germans, who generally excel in their linguistic knowledge, for instance, French, owe their success to the possession of superior intellects, or have their tongues and other organs of speech not to encounter the same, or similar, difficulties as those of the English? I leave the first of these two questions unanswered, supposing that everyone has made up his mind about it. As for the second, I have not the slightest hesitation in stating that the task is quite as difficult to them as to us, for

the Parisian ridicules the German as well as the Englishman on account of his accent. But the truth is, the task of learning French is not so much a question of cleverness and superior intellect, as of continued and patient plodding. The superiority of the German in this respect is simply due to the fact that he has the advantage of having received a good grounding: and, besides, he has an eye to business, and means to make his living by languages; and then, the shrewd fellow knows that the greater his proficiency in a language, the better will be the remuneration to be obtained by its means.

Now take, for instance, the Frenchman, who is generally a very bad hand at learning foreign languages. The reason of that is, not that he lacks cleverness and abilities to learn them, but he has the ridiculous notion that his own language is the language '*par excellence—la langue universelle*,' and, consequently, he thinks it beneath his dignity to acquire that of any other nationality. So much to explain the facility the Germans, and the inability the French show in acquiring modern languages.

The acquisition of the correct pronunciation of a foreign language is, by no means, a very easy matter, but to say that it is of such difficulty as to render it impossible to Englishmen to deal with it successfully is sheer nonsense. There are numbers of English people who pronounce remarkably well, and, judging from my own experience in teaching, I cannot say that I have experienced greater difficulties with English pupils than with others of German or Italian nationality in my endeavours to teach them how to pronounce correctly. I am of opinion that the pronunciation is by far the easiest part of the task of learning a language, yet the difficulty of its pronunciation is always made the principal excuse for an Englishman's ignorance of it. But this excuse is a mere cloak to hide his ignorance, for, as a rule, the one who pronounces—as, for example, French—in the manner so much and so very justly ridiculed in the comic papers of the day, will be found equally deficient in his grammatical knowledge, and his boast of being able to read it means only guess-work. And why this can only be so, and not otherwise, I

hope to show conclusively in the following chapter.

In concluding this chapter, I maintain that he who confesses that a foreign language has proved too much for him, must either have been badly taught, or his perseverance and thirst for knowledge were not of the kind to enable him to succeed. He may fitly be compared to a traveller who pushes on gladly so long as his way lies in the plain; but, when it becomes mountainous and rugged, when his progress is barred by towering peaks which must be climbed before the promised land is reached, grows weary and discouraged, and shrinks back from the obstacles in his path, and, at last, relinquishes his enterprise, nothing remaining of his attempt but broken recollections, with which he generally contrives to make himself ridiculous in the eyes of those who, being endowed with superior courage, have successfully achieved the journey.

CAUSES OF THE POOR RESULTS

OF THE STUDY OF MODERN LANGUAGES.

As I have already remarked in the preceding chapter, the acquisition of a foreign language, though a difficult undertaking, must not be considered as one which it is impossible to achieve; yet, on the other hand, it ought not to be considered so easy as certain advertisements, or small publications, such as '*French in three or six months*,' or '*French at sight*,' etc., would lead us to suppose. The object which the student of modern languages has in view can only be attained by means of able arrangements, very careful training, and, above all, through the medium of really efficient teachers.

Have we complied with the conditions necessary for rendering success in studying modern languages possible? Are our teachers really as efficient as we suppose them to be? Are they able to give the careful training the subject requires? And, lastly, is the study carried on under satisfactory arrangements?

During the Franco-German war, the French and everyone else were surprised at the great number of German soldiers who were able to speak French. No such surprise could have been caused had people, outside Germany, known more about German school-regulations than they really did. In the '*Gymnasium*,' the preparatory school for the universities, French is studied in the same thorough manner as Latin and Greek; English has only been introduced in recent times, but the time may not be far distant when it will be considered as important as French. At present, no student is admitted to a university without possessing a thorough knowledge of French. And in schools, such as '*Real, Gewerbe und Höhere Bürger Schulen*,' which do not aim at a classical education, and prepare only for commercial and various scientific pursuits, the theoretical and practical study of French and English is rigorously insisted upon. The consequence is that a fair proportion of the better classes of German society speak either French or English, and that a far larger number of them have a sound theoretical knowledge of French at least. Of

the latter it may be said, '*Ils savent le français parfaitement, mais ils n'ont pas l'habitude de le parler;*' and in how surprisingly short a time a man who has a thorough knowledge of a modern language may make himself at home in a foreign country, the Franco-German war has given ample proof. All this Germany has achieved at little cost, by means of a judicious classification of schools, able arrangements, and, above all, with efficient, as native French teachers could not be had, German teachers.

Now let us see how these things are managed in England.

It is true, a boy, or rather his parents, may choose in almost every school between classical and modern languages; and, if there exist no distinct establishments for classical and modern education, as in Germany, the working plan of schools and the accommodating spirit of English headmasters admit of a classification of scholars within the school in these respects.

French and German are also requirements in most examinations; but it is not a '*thorough knowledge*' that is required of the

candidates in these subjects, only a knowledge with which pupils may be crammed in the course of a few months, and which, of course, is forgotten in less time than it took to cram them.

In the choice of teachers of modern languages, England has also adopted a plan of her own ; she has gone in for foreign teachers. No doubt this plan would have answered very well—a Frenchman or German must be better qualified to teach his mother-tongue than an Englishman—if these foreign teachers had always had a fair knowledge of English, and had also been experienced in teaching.

But the supply of native French and German teachers falling short of the excessive demand, English headmasters, in order to keep pace with the requirements of the times, had to take any foreigner they could get hold of; thus it happened that English schools became harbours of refuge for all sorts of foreigners out of work.

I hope the case is altered now, or, at least, is improving; but until very recently, numbers of foreigners, merchants' clerks, mechanics, waiters, etc., left, for various reasons, their

native countries and came to England in the hope of making their fortune.* Not being able to find occupation in their trades, they gladly accepted anything offered to them. Many of them found their way into English private boarding schools, which they could do easily enough through the medium of scholastic agents.

They may not always have been uneducated persons, but, even supposing them to have been well educated, that does not imply that they were good teachers. Becherelle says: '*Rien de plus commun, malheureusement, que de voir des maîtres fort instruits, et ne sachant pas enseigner. Ce ne sont pas les connaissances qui leur manquent, mais ils ne savent*

* It must not be believed that this statement is an exaggeration. A recent French writer—I have forgotten his name—says, in an essay on England, from which copious extracts appeared in the daily papers about three months ago: 'English people must not judge France by that France existing amongst them, as it is principally composed of barbers, tailors, waiters, communists, and various shades of political refugees. However this may be, certain it is that a number of '*mauvais sujets et ignorants*' found, and probably still find, their way into English schools.

pas en tirer parti.' And then they looked upon teaching as a mere makeshift, and cared little about their work, their mind being continually occupied with plans and resolutions how to make their escape from the thraldom of English boarding-school life.

Take, for instance, the case of a foreigner who enters an English boarding-school with a very imperfect knowledge of English, perhaps none at all; what good can we expect of such an individual? Suppose him to be a good scholar and a first-rate teacher in his own native style. All that avails him nothing, as he is quite a stranger to our way of managing boys. '*It is not sufficient that he is master of the subject he has to teach; he must, above all, be able to master those whom he has to instruct.*' And if the task of managing a class of our boys is difficult to English teachers, what chance has a foreigner, who lacks in most cases the principal means for the accomplishment of his task? His imperfect knowledge of English gives rise, justly or unjustly, to a series of misunderstandings and ridiculous scenes. As he does not possess the power of a clear and ready

expression, he is quite helpless, and at the tender mercy of his pupils. When worried by them, he cannot help flying into a passion, which affords great amusement to the tormentors, who, once having found out his foible, torment him systematically. If the matter is referred to the headmaster, the foreigner's cause is quite hopeless, because the boy knows how to plead, and he does not.

Imagine what knowledge under these circumstances he will be able to impart, and how careful the training will be which the pupils receive at his hands!

And why does the headmaster not support him? Thereby hangs another tale. The headmaster, who is generally a great Greek and Latin scholar, has, in most cases, but a very indifferent knowledge of modern languages. Consequently, in choosing his foreign assistant, he depends entirely on the foreigner's dress and personal appearance, or engages him on the recommendation of his agent and other referees. Previous experience having taught him that these sources cannot always be depended upon, he looks at

his assistant, from the very beginning, with a distrustful eye; and when unavoidable squabbles respecting the lessons, tasks, and especially about the behaviour of the boys, occur, he is but too readily inclined to think that the foreigner is in the wrong, that he cannot manage the boys, and that he overtasks them. Very often the cautious headmaster does not want to interfere, as he might be compelled to be strict and just, which, he argues, might prove injurious to his business. '*He can always get a foreign master through an agent, but pupils are not so easily come by.*' The pupils, cunning rogues, are very sharp in finding out which way the wind blows, and take advantage of it.

It is also to be deplored that parents, on finding that their children make no progress, do not take them from the school, instead of being delighted at hearing of the clever tricks their offspring are practising upon the poor assistant teachers.

In many cases, especially in small schools, the study of modern languages is not regularly carried on, or, for the sake of saving money, not sufficient time is allowed for

teaching them. The underpaid teachers are always on the look-out for a better place, and the continual change of masters thus brought about must also greatly impede the progress of the pupils.

Some pupils begin the study too late, and the tall gentlemen, not liking to work with beginners, who are generally little boys, treat the subject with indifference, and become instrumental in upsetting the discipline of the class. To avoid this, they are perhaps put into a class of advanced pupils, where, of course, they are equally out of place.

Another, and unfortunately very common cause, is, that many pupils, on some pretext or other, leave off learning modern languages for some time, and begin again when they have nearly forgotten what they had previously learnt. Parents who give way to the whims of their children are much to blame. Young ladies and gentlemen are often allowed to discontinue their studies, as, for instance, on pleading their dislike to the master or governess who teaches them, whilst the truth is, that they only dislike the labour which the *study* entails.

This is fostering the idleness and unwillingness to work which is quite natural with children. To tender-hearted mothers and unsuspecting fathers and masters, a retrospective glance at the days of their childhood and the years they passed at school would be very instructive. It would teach them to understand children better than they generally do. '*Children look such innocent creatures, which no doubt they are. However, in lack of understanding, they are gifted with an admirable tact, and are guided by a sort of instinct in finding out the foibles of those with whom they are brought into contact, so that they seldom fail to defeat the designs of their unsuspecting parents and even their teachers.*' The latter ought, therefore, to be continually on their guard, that their children and pupils do not manage them, instead of being managed by them.

In concluding this chapter, I cannot help remarking that the absurd notions which exist regarding the study of modern languages, the easy way in which people are taken in by deceptive advertisements, and persuaded to buy books which teach lan-

guages in an incredibly short space of time, are not to be wondered at, if the school, which alone can foster a proper taste for such studies, does not do its duty—nay, seems, on the contrary, to use every effort to nip it in the bud.

'*Plants that are not well tended in their early growth, but rarely grow up hardy and useful specimens. The study of modern languages may be likened to a plant sadly neglected in the nursery, for the school is the nursery-ground of knowledge and study.*'

* * * * *

Before proceeding with the subject with which my little essay has principally to deal, viz., '*The Teaching of French in Schools*,' I seize the opportunity of making a few remarks '*On Studying it among Natives*,' and on its '*Teaching in the Nursery*.'

THE STUDY AMONG NATIVES.

THERE are many who believe that modern languages must be learnt among natives, and cannot be acquired at home unless the study begins in early childhood, under the guidance of native nurses or governesses; in short, that the same course must be taken as that by means of which we become gradually acquainted with our mother tongue. No doubt there is much truth in these theories, as either plan would greatly facilitate the task, but I must strenuously oppose the opinion, that they are the only ways that lead to a successful study of modern languages.

The fortunate few who have had an opportunity of learning French by a prolonged stay among the natives, will know '*that it is not so easily and quickly acquired as is generally supposed; at all events, the idea that the mere breathing of Parisian air will inspire anyone with the French language is an erroneous one.*'

People arriving with such Utopian notions

in Paris will find themselves much disappointed, and, I am sure, will have a sorry time of it during the first year's stay, if they bring but little or no knowledge of the language with them. No one knows of those moments of despair, and even of tears, but the afflicted students themselves. More than ordinary courage and persistency are required for the attainment of a successful issue.

A prolonged stay in Paris will not be of much use without earnest and hard studying. Of course, the plodding student stands a far better chance among the natives than he does at home. If this were not so, how could we account for the fact that there are so many foreigners who, although having resided amongst us for years, have but a very imperfect knowledge of English? Similar observations, I dare say, may be made in any other country regarding foreign residents.

I have known many educated persons who had lived for years in a foreign country, without learning much of the native tongue. Though deeply sensible of the value of such an accomplishment, they avoided the trouble of acquiring it, especially where it was not

absolutely necessary to them as a means of gaining their livelihood.

I remember, amongst others, an English clergyman in Italy, who, after having contrived by means of signs, and a word put in here and there, to make some observations to the native who was cleaning the church, turned with a blush to me, and said: 'You see, though I have been here about ten years, I do not know much about Italian!' This and similar facts which I could relate, show that, in order '*to learn a language among the natives, an earnest desire to acquire it, and not only a way, but above all a will, is necessary.*'

Foreigners staying in Paris often cannot make much progress in learning the language, because they have no opportunities of making useful acquaintances. During my first six months in Paris, I added very little to my previous imported knowledge of French, if I may use the expression; for, at the French lodging-house where I lived, I knew no one except the concierge, from whom I could not learn much, nor could I depend much on acquaintances that I occasionally made.

The task of helping a foreigner who is just

beginning to talk is a terribly trying one for a native, and I defy anything but love or money to produce the patience that is required for it. The Frenchman is no exception to the rule; indeed, with him, it almost amounts to impoliteness to correct the mistakes his foreign friend is making. When asked to give his assistance, he will, with the politeness so characteristic of his nationality, kindly and willingly offer his services, and, of course, in utter ignorance of what he is pledging himself to; indeed, for the next few moments he is all energy, and you can't help being charmed with his readiness to help you; but, alas! that zeal which at first appeared inexhaustible, very quickly gives way to weariness.

The cheapest and best way for a striving scholar is always to go to a school or a place where people are compelled to teach and assist him in every possible way. Many think it a great saving if they can find a place in a school or family. This is a great mistake, as it is certain to result in a loss of time and money, if it does not become a serious obstacle to a continuous and careful study. In

the first instance, a foreigner, not knowing French, gets in a situation very little, if anything at all. Secondly, for the little salary he does receive, he is expected to work a great deal, and has very little time left for his own use. Moreover, being compelled to teach and speak his own language all day long, he hears but here and there a French sentence, and thus it takes him perhaps years to achieve what in a school would be only the work of so many months. On the other hand, the outlay for schooling is, comparatively speaking, very small; in fact, he could not live more economically anywhere else. The student, after six months' assiduous study, can look out for a place that offers better remuneration, and thus reimburse himself for the outlay in money at the school; but the most precious gain is, that he has treasured up in that time a substantial and thorough knowledge, enabling him to make acquaintances and improve himself in many other ways.

NURSERY STUDIES.

It is well known how apt and quick children are, not only in catching the sounds of which a foreign language consists, and imitating them to perfection with their little pliable tongues, but also in retaining words and whole phrases. With incredible rapidity they make themselves at home in foreign countries, learn to understand their foreign playmates or the servants under whose care they are placed, and converse with them with as much ease as if they were using their mother tongue. If they are so placed as to have but few opportunities of speaking their native language, they soon prefer that of the country in which they live, and it often happens that they have more difficulties in expressing their thoughts properly in their own language, than in that which they have adopted.

Being stationed for three years (1862-65) at the Central German Missionary School, in Paris, I had a good opportunity of making

observations. In the schoolroom the pupils were Germans, but directly they entered the playground they became French. Indeed, we had great difficulty in keeping up their knowledge of their mother tongue to the level of that of the French language. The French authorities made the most strenuous efforts to change every German working-man arriving in Paris into a Frenchman; still greater was the eagerness displayed by the Catholic clergy to make converts. One day, Baron Haussmann, at that time Prefect of Paris, entered my school, and inquired very particularly whether we taught our pupils French. 'You see,' he said, apologetically, 'there is such an immense number of Germans in Paris, quite sufficient to cause us the most serious embarrassment in case they choose to break out into open revolt.' He was very pleased in finding that, with the exception of the most recent arrivals from Germany, they all were able to express themselves fluently in French.

There were many cases brought under my notice, where the children of the poor German labourers (chiefly street-sweepers) talked

French fluently and willingly, whilst they spoke German very badly, and only when compelled. Before the establishment of these schools, the parents were very glad to have their children taken care of in French schools; but as parents and children only met, when the former returned tired from their daily toil, the children gradually forgot their native tongue, so far that, in the end, they were unable to converse at all with their parents, who had neither time nor inclination to learn French. Thus it happened that parents and children became almost strangers to each other. Such and similar facts coming to the ears of the Prussian ambassador, Count Pourtalès, permission was obtained from the Imperial Government to establish these German missionary schools.

How are we to account for such facts, and what must be the inference drawn from them? Simply, that the elastic minds of children are capable of assuming, without any perceptible effort, any shape or form, and easily give way to predominating circumstances. It is for this reason that they experience little or no difficulty in acquiring a correct pronunciation,

and in getting hold of the most peculiar turns of a foreign language. That age then, when memory and the power to imitate are in preponderance, must be the best time to begin the study of modern languages.

No doubt careful nursery training at that period saves years of tiresome study afterwards. But if children do not get on well with their foreign attendants, if they receive an imperfect training, they will afterwards find more difficulty in continuing the study of the language at school than others who had no previous training, as it is often very difficult to remedy the mistakes which inferior foreign attendants have made.

Servants ought never to be entrusted with such a highly important task. Their employment is not only objectionable on the ground that they impart an imperfect knowledge of the subject immediately concerned, but it is dangerous to employ them, as children often contract bad, low habits, which may impede the child's success at school—nay, even in life.

The success of the nursery training is frequently endangered by the praise which is

often lavished upon the little scholars. If a sentence of a foreign language uttered by a grown-up person gives the impression of deep learning and inspires respect, it charms when it proceeds from tiny lips, and is perfectly irresistible if the admiring listeners do not happen to understand it. Can we wonder, then, that the little scholars, even with the most imperfect knowledge, take by storm the hearts of fond parents and affectionate aunts and uncles! How is it possible to shield such little conquerors from conceit? They must get spoiled by hearing their cleverness extolled in a continuous strain of praise, in which visitors or friends are expected to join.

Children spoiled in this manner are often very difficult to deal with at school, as they go there with the notion that they know French already; the change from the playful memory-practice in the nursery, to the severe mental practice at school, is to them very distasteful.

Even if nursery training had not these serious drawbacks, and was always superintended by able foreign attendants, who are by no means so numerous and so easily and

cheaply to be had as is generally thought, it can only be considered a preparation for future and more serious studies, for '*The Study at School.*'

THE STUDY AT SCHOOL.

WHEN we take into consideration that the knowledge which the best nursery training produces can only serve as a basis for more serious work at school, and that study among natives is merely to be regarded as the finishing-up of the school or grammar teaching, it will be apparent that the latter does not owe its importance solely to the fact of being the principal means on which the largest portion of the middle classes relies for the learning of modern languages, but because it is as necessary to the two other methods as the backbone is to the body. And I do not hesitate for a moment to assert, that, without its care, the tender, graceful, and wonderful plant reared up in the nursery cannot thrive—for the child is as apt to forget

as to learn—and the other would strongly resemble a house built upon the sand.

As there are but few parents who can afford to keep an able foreign governess or tutor for their children, or send them for several years to school in a foreign country; in short, as such methods are within the reach of the wealthier classes of society only, on account of the expenses which they entail, we are naturally driven to expect much more from the school than it has hitherto given.

Till now, the school has either limited its instruction in modern languages to a dry, wearisome, uninteresting study of the grammar; has, in fact, pursued a course similar to that taken in the teaching of the classical languages, or has, by making the study of the grammar a secondary object, adopted an aimless, rambling plan, in imitation of the nursery training and study among natives, and, of course, has signally failed in its endeavours to impart a thorough knowledge of these branches of education.

The inability of the school to deal successfully with these subjects has produced the most disastrous consequences. For, with its

imperfect efforts, the school has not only not fulfilled its mission, but has proved most fatal to the diffusion of the knowledge of modern languages. It has been inferred that they can only be successfully acquired by nursery training, or by going abroad, and that it is quite useless attempting their acquisition at school. Thus discouraged, masters and pupils have been carrying on a hopeless contest, with what success we all know. No doubt the study of modern languages would have been abandoned altogether by many, had it not been thought that, for fashion's sake, a quarter or two of French or German was necessary.

However, I am far from sharing such desponding views. Experience has shown me that the school can be made more useful, and I think that educational establishments which give only a commercial education, and consequently, have more time at their disposal for the study of modern tongues, can even compete with the two other rival methods with a fair chance of success, and without any detriment to other branches of education. It has but to adopt a method which embodies,

to some extent, the principal duties of the nursery training, giving at the same time the elements of the grammar, and on the thorough knowledge of the grammar base the duties of the finishing-up study. In short, instruction must be based upon a method which gradually improves the capacity and readiness of the memory, familiarises the ear with the strange sounds from the very beginning, develops by degrees the pliability of the tongue and the power of expressing one's self in a foreign language; and, above all, causes the students to think and to take an interest in their lessons.

Suppose that such a method is adopted, and carried out under the superintendence of suitable masters, success cannot be doubtful. Being gradually prepared for grammar and conversation, the pupils will not be frightened when each of these studies begins in real earnest; and, if they are not excessively stupid, and suppose them to have lessons for five, six, or even seven years—the time boys generally spend at school—I do not think it would be at all unreasonable to expect that they must, at the very least, acquire '*a know-*

ledge sufficient for tourist purposes, a knowledge which, with but little additional labour, might be utilised for more serious pursuits in life, such as correspondence and teaching.' Should a pupil not be able to complete his study at school, on account of illness, or other causes which may lead to lengthened interruptions, he must at all events learn something, a something forming a sound basis for future studies.

In accordance with the above-expressed views, the whole study would have to be divided in three distinct stages or courses, viz. :

1. The preparatory or introductory course.
2. The study of grammar and reading.
3. That of composition and conversation.

It must not be inferred, from the names given to the three courses, that there should be no grammar and reading taught in the first, or no conversation in the second, etc. Conversation, grammar, and reading will be found, to a certain extent, in every course, as I shall fully explain in the succeeding chapters.

Before I proceed with the development of

my scheme, I must mention that, in order to be better understood, to be clearer and more precise in my statements regarding the duties of the master, I have thought it of advantage to single out one language on which I could illustrate my views.

In selecting French, I have been guided by the fact that it heads the list of modern languages studied in English schools. Of course the method which I have sketched out for the teaching of French applies, except with some very small and insignificant changes, with equal force to other languages.

FIRST COURSE.

THE PREPARATORY OR INTRODUCTORY STUDY.

I HAVE called this the preparatory or introductory study, because the pupils acquire by means of it a general knowledge of the French language, become acquainted with its *most* simple forms, and are, in some measure,

gradually prepared for conversation and a systematic study of the grammar.

The pupils should begin the study as early as possible; perhaps as soon as they can read English fairly well; at all events not later than at the age of ten. I don't think it advisable to teach pupils under that age with the aid of books; nursery lessons for a few quarters would better answer the purpose. The pupils would have thus at least five or six years within which to acquire French. During the first course, young pupils ought to have three lessons a week at the very least, and, in cases where this number cannot be afforded, additional hours must be devoted to the repetition and preparation of the lessons with a competent person (*vide* 'Repetition and Drilling-up'). For older pupils, say, of fourteen and upwards, two or three hours a week are sufficient, as they are able to supply the loss in tuition by their riper understanding, industry, and perseverance.

Among the mass of handbooks to be recommended, deserve especially to be mentioned: *Dr. Ahn's First Course,* adapted by different English authors, whose productions,

though differing in some minor respects, are equally useful; *Dr. Ploetze's Elementary Grammar of the French Language*, adapted from the German by F. Schoefwinkel; and *Havet's First French Course.* The latter two, however, not relying so much upon repetition as gradation, are evidently more suitable for riper intellects. Havet's book I recommend especially to the attention of teachers, as it would give them an idea how to use Ahn's and Ploetze's books with success. For little pupils, however, the best book is Dr. Ahn's method, though it is capable of improvement here and there, and probably its merits have contributed to its general adoption. But excellent as these books are, they become only useful in the hands of able, conscientious teachers, and industrious pupils.

The teachers, especially those who have charge of classes of little pupils, must be able to explain themselves well in English; and, as this is not very often a qualification met with in foreigners, I think it would be far better to employ English masters or governesses who possess a thorough knowledge of French.

The employment of English teachers is also preferable for the following reasons :

Firstly. The teaching of French teachers has not produced results which speak in their favour. Germany, which, almost without direct French aid, manages to give instruction in French, has obtained far better results than other countries have.

Secondly. French teachers, with but rare exceptions, appear to understand that the principal means of learning a language are translation and frequent repetition, mind and memory-practice combined, principles which are thoroughly recognised in books of German origin. They go so far as to say that the German authors did not know French—perhaps they did not; anyhow, Dr. Ahn and others seem to have known pretty well what little students wanted—they prefer to teach solely by imitation, or memory-practice, and with the aid of grammars, conversation, and phrase-books; hence it comes that tourist guides, conversation books, and other more or less useless compilations, are mostly of French origin, and that Frenchmen have only achieved success in the production of grammars which

are mere imitations and adaptations of books devised for use in their native schools.

It is very easy to account for the more practical value of books produced by German authors. As poor and despotic Germany did not hold out the same attractions to Frenchmen as '*la perfide, mais riche Albion*,' the Germans were compelled to rely upon themselves; and how did they meet the difficulty? The German governments, town councils, and other patrons of schools, ever anxious to provide their schools with efficient teachers, sent students possessing an aptitude for learning languages to France and England for the completion of their studies, who only, after having given satisfactory proof of having employed their time well, were intrusted with the task of giving instruction in schools. As it is too well known how this system has worked, there is no necessity to say much more about its advantages. No doubt, had the English not trusted so much to their French visitors, they would have succeeded as well as the Germans.

An objection might be raised against the employment of Englishmen on account of

their accent. Of course they will be found more or less wanting on this point; however, any deficiency in this respect will be more than counterbalanced by other and far more valuable qualifications. But how is it with the Frenchman's accent and knowledge of his own language? In considering this point, we must not forget that France is a very large country, in which, as in England and Germany, a variety of dialects are spoken. So we must, after all, believe that monsieur comes from Paris, and pronounces and knows his language well.

Thirdly. Another reason for the employment of English teachers is that they possess more aptness for imparting their knowledge than Frenchmen. The latter, who have experienced no difficulty whatever in acquiring their mother tongue, and who have not observed in children of their own country the awkwardness which their English pupils exhibit, are rather given to underrate the capacity of English children, and to consider them excessively stupid.

As they do not understand the difficulties which their pupils quite naturally experience,

they cannot be expected to know the best way of overcoming them. They come very soon to the conclusion that their task is a hopeless one, and consequently make no attempt to help their pupils on in patience. In most cases they have not that command of the English tongue which is required for the execution of their duty. The result of all this is that their instruction is given in a mechanical, half-hearted, heart-discouraging sort of a way, which alone suffices to make it a very unprofitable proceeding.

Without taking into account the gain in discipline, I believe that English teachers would do infinitely better, especially at the age when pupils require instructors who can make everything as clear as daylight to them. The English teacher who has learnt French in the same manner as his pupils, who has experienced and conquered all the difficulties which the subject offers, will be more able to adapt himself to their wants and to help them to overcome their difficulties. There are many Germans intrusted with instruction in French; why not then employ well qualified *English* teachers?

In concluding this chapter, I feel bound to point out the fallacy of the theory which, I fear, is but too generally acted upon, viz., '*that, with regard to young pupils, the qualifications of teachers are a matter of extreme indifference.*' Just at the beginning, when the firm foundation which is wanted for future studies is to be laid down, everything depends on the judicious choice of an instructor for the child. It occurs far more frequently than is generally supposed, that, through carelessness, irregularity, and indifferent tuition at that stage, many blooming hopes are withered, and many promising intellects ruined.

GENERAL REMARKS ON PRONUNCIATION.

A GOOD pronunciation is one of the most essential points to which the student of French has to direct his attention. For without it, conversation, if not wholly impossible, is at least much impeded; besides, as a

bad accent always exposes its owner to ridicule, it is often a cause of discouragement and an obstacle in the way to further improvement. Whatever may be the result of a bad pronunciation, it always gives the impression of carelessness in the teacher and indifference on the part of the pupil; and I dare say it would not be wrong to lay it down, as a general rule, that the one who pronounces badly has generally an inferior knowledge of French. However, there are individuals whose ears are so dull, and who have so little command over their organs of speech, that it is really impossible for them to pronounce properly. Such cases are, however, quite exceptional, and, with the majority of students, the acquirement of a good pronunciation is only a matter of earnest application.

The importance of a correct and distinct pronunciation ought to induce pupils to strive more earnestly to acquire it than is generally the case. There cannot be the slightest doubt that the carelessness and negligence displayed with regard to pronunciation is one of the chief causes of the miserable results

which the study of modern languages has yielded.

As it is of the highest importance that a teacher should know what are the principal difficulties his pupils experience, and in what points the English pronunciation differs from the French, an intimate acquaintance with our tongue is one of the chief qualifications of a good teacher.

Those who have given a little attention to the subject will know that there exists but little or no difference in the pronunciation of the consonants in the two languages, the '*r* and *j*' being the only exception. But as regards the vowels, a wide difference exists, and in this direction lie the difficulties with which English pupils have to contend.

The difference is not very marked in the *a* and *i*; it is a little more perceptible in *è*, *ê*, *ais*, *aie*, *aye*, and strongly represented in *é*, *ai*, *o*, *ou*, *u*, *eu*, and *au*. The letters *a*, *i*, *è*, *ê*, *ais*, *aie*, *aye*, and perhaps also *o* and *ou*, find representatives in the English alphabet; but *é*, *ai*, *u*, *eu*, are not to be found in our language.

But what is the difference between the

French and English vowels, and what is the cause of it?

The French define a vowel to be a simple emission of the voice, which is produced by a certain position of the lips and the other organs of speech, which is not altered until the voice has ceased to sound. We are less accurate. The English vowel, not being produced with the same steadiness of the organs of speech, loses in clearness. The fact is, we accompany the effort made in producing the vowel with movements of our lips. The peculiar movement of our lips occurs at the beginning and end of the vowel; and therefore, instead of producing one single pure sound, we give to it three different shades.

The first, which may be looked upon as an introduction to the vowel, is produced whilst the organs of speech are in the act of assuming the position requisite for its correct pronunciation. When that position is assumed, the second shade, or pure vowel, predominates, the effect of which is completely marred by the third—the finishing touch given to the vowel—and which is produced by a rapid

movement of the lips, seemingly already preparing for the production of another vowel. These three movements are performed in such a rapid succession, that the three essentially different sounds which they produce appear to form only one single sound. In this manner that unmusical sound, our vowel, is produced, and our language rendered less melodious than others.

The peculiar way in which we pronounce our vowels makes the French *é*, *eu*, *au*, and *u*, difficult to us. The production of the latter requires a very peculiar position of the mouth, somewhat like that of a person whistling. As there is no English vowel requiring the same or a similar position, the ridiculous belief, that English organs of speech are unable to deal with it successfully has originated. The truth is, our chief difficulty in dealing with this vowel consists not so much in the impossibility of assuming the position of the mouth necessary for its production, as in the inability to keep our lips from moving whilst pronouncing it. The same applies to *eu*, *é*, and, in a certain measure, to *è* and *au*.

THE NASALS.—The pronunciation of the

nasals is closely connected with that of the vowels. They, as well as the vowels, must be learnt by imitating the pronunciation of the teacher. I think, however, that the following remarks regarding their production are not out of place. To be better understood in explaining these so often misrepresented and misunderstood sounds, I take as an example the nasal *on*. The *n* and the preceding vowel *o* are pronounced through the nose without the slightest movement of either tongue or lips, the vowel regulating the position of the mouth. This is the whole theory of the nasal, and the explanation given would be quite sufficient, were it only properly understood and conscientiously executed. Our unsteady lips make the *n* the prominent object in pronouncing, instead of the vowel *o*, which is the principal part of the nasal.

CLASSIFICATION OF THE NASALS.—There are four different kinds of nasals :

1. *On a*, as in *an*, *am*, *en*, *em*, *ean*.
2. *On è*, as in *eil*, *eill*.
3. On *e* (*le*), or *eu*, as in *un*, *um*, *eun*.
4. On *è*, as in *in*, *im*, *ein*, *eim*, *ain*, *aim*, *yn*, *ym*.

5. There remains yet a fifth, *ien, yen,* which is, however, only the nasal *on è,* preceded by an *i;* the latter is so rapidly pronounced that it partakes more of the nature of a consonant than a vowel.

LIQUIDS.—The liquids constitute another peculiarity of the French language. Though their pronunciation does not offer insurmountable difficulties to English tongues, it is impossible to give an exact description for guidance in their pronunciation. They can, therefore, only be learnt by hearing the teacher pronounce them. They have, like the nasals, a vowel for their basis. To facilitate their reading and pronunciation to the pupils, it is useful to classify them in the same manner as the nasals.

CLASSIFICATION OF THE LIQUIDS:

1. *On a,* as in *ail, aill.*
2. *On è,* as in *eil, eill.*
3, On *ou,* as in *ouil, ouill.*
4. *On eu,* as in { *euil, euill.* / *ueil, ueill.* / *oeil, oeill.* }
5. *On i,* as in *il, ill.*
6. The *gn* is also classed among the liquids.

Unlike the others, it does not depend on a vowel. The *n*, though following the *g*, belongs to the preceding syllable, and the *g*, and perhaps also the *e*, as in *campagne*, *montagne* represent the ending of all other liquids.

Of great difficulty is also the proper articulation of the vowel *i*, forming one syllable with two or more letters, as in *ieu*, *ieur*, *ions*, *iez*, *ier*, *ière*, *ien*, *yen*. To facilitate their pronunciation, it is advisable to pronounce them first without the consonants preceding these endings, as in *d-ieu*, *p-ieux*. Though we have something similar in *due*, *pupil*, the aid of a good and painstaking teacher is indispensable to get hold of their proper pronunciation. The same applies in some measure to the vowel *o* followed by an *i*.

CONSONANTS.—The *r* and *h* are the only consonants which call for remark.

The *r* has a harsher sound in French, and is produced by the vibration of the root, or, rather, the part of the palate overlapping that part of the tongue.

The *h aspirée* must be mentioned here; but not on account of the difficulty of its pronunciation. Its name might lead us to sup-

pose that such a thing as an aspirated *h* really exists. As a Frenchman is unable to pronounce an *h*, the difference between *h muette* and *h aspirée* is purely grammatical.

The inability of the French to aspirate the *h* like the English or Germans, was well known and made most of during the invasion of France. The French having sometimes managed to learn the watchwords of the invaders, and contrived, by this means, to surprise outlying parties, the latter chose words beginning with an *h* to guard themselves against surprise. The Israelites had recourse to a similar means in forcing every man about to cross the fords of Jordan to pronounce the word 'Shibboleth.'

ADDITIONAL REMARKS.—A characteristic feature of French pronunciation is the distinct articulation or separation of syllables, which even in the swiftest utterance is distinctly adhered to. To a foreigner unacquainted with French, the speech of persons of inferior education, with coarse, harsh voices, sounds, therefore, very much like the beating of a drum, or the noise of a cart moving over a gravelled or uneven road.

This precision and exactness in separating the syllables, though not particularly pleasing in coarse and gruff voices, gives elegance to utterance when softened by the graceful modulation of the voices of educated people.

As this practice is altogether opposed to the rules on which the pronunciation of the English idiom is based, it is necessary to direct the attention of pupils to it. As far as I am aware, the value of the separation of syllables has only been recognised in Havet's French Course, and there perhaps solely with the view of facilitating the reading of the lessons given at the beginning of the book. Other books, such as Delille's, for instance, only mention the subject to illustrate the difference existing between French and English syllabic division.

Its importance as one of the most essential principles and means of teaching pronunciation has, I think, been but very little appreciated and acted upon.

THE TEACHING OF PRONUNCIATION.

THERE are two things which should principally be kept in view in teaching pronunciation, viz., *primary pronunciation*, comprising the correct articulation of vowels and consonants, and *fluency-practice*, which is intended to give to the tongue and the other organs of speech the necessary flexibility and readiness for pronouncing whole sentences with ease, as required for conversation and reading.

In the first course, the principal task of the teacher is to initiate the pupils into the difficulties of *primary pronunciation;* fluency, though acquired to a certain extent, is perfected in the succeeding stages; but of course, as reading and conversation are prepared, and practised in some measure a corresponding proficiency in fluency is attained.

The teacher cannot pay too much attention to primary pronunciation. He must strictly

deal with the difficulties one by one, and never leave one for another until it is thoroughly mastered; the belief, that the pupils will be able to overcome them by-and-by, must not lull him into false security. His action must resemble that of a good general; for, if he cannot dispose of the difficulties in detail, he will never succeed in overcoming them when their number has become legion. With care and patience, a correct pronunciation may be always secured. But the master's task is an exceedingly trying one. At the beginning, he must toil on day by day, lesson by lesson. Like a good gardener who carefully plucks up the weeds that would hinder the growth of his plants, so the teacher must be continually on the watch to guard his pupils against carelessness which would endanger the work of previous lessons. Even when his patience is most severely tried, he must not allow himself to be conquered by weariness or despair, and not come to the conclusion that his task is a hopeless one. He must not expect too much of his pupils at once. Of course, if he has studied French himself, he will know that unremitting atten-

tion on his part, and the utmost perseverance on the part of his pupils, are requisite to ensure success.

The prolonged awkwardness of pupils to pronounce correctly, so often met with, are but too frequently the result of the master's inefficiency and want of patience. Let him but try patient toiling along, and I have no doubt that he will not find his pupils so very stupid; on the contrary, he will have the pleasure of seeing his efforts crowned with success—in short, obtain results which must be a source of satisfaction and just pride both to himself and to his pupils.

Many masters, following the example set them by pronouncing dictionaries, French self-instructors, and other similar compilations, are fond of facilitating pronunciation by examples taken from our own language. Laudable as their intentions may be, I do not think it advisable to follow such a course, as the examples taken from their mother tongue might induce pupils to fancy they are learning things which they know already, and consequently tempt them to take less care and trouble in acquiring them. And after all, the

pupils would have to find out afterwards that these examples were but the mere shadows of what they were intended to represent. Instead of facilitating the task to young pupils, they often render it more difficult and perplexing to them.

I remember a schoolmaster in the north of England who used to illustrate the difference between the masculine and feminine of the adjective *good*—*bon* and *bonne*—with the help of the word *bonfire*. '*Bon* is pronounced *bon*,' he used to say (giving the pronunciation of it); 'but *bonne* is pronounced exactly like the first syllable of the word *bonfire*.' I have not the least doubt that his intentions were good; but, as it often happens, good intentions are not always appreciated, and so it was in this instance. The good man thought he had hit upon a very clever expedient, and I think it would have answered very well, but for the spelling of his auxiliary, or, as he believed, '*the disgraceful stupidity of his pupils*;' for, instead of helping his little pupils over the difficulty, it contributed not a little to confuse them still more. They invariably pronounced *bon* (the masculine form)

like the first syllable of the word *bonfire*, instead of applying it to the feminine form, the pronunciation of which he intended to teach them by this illustration. The same master advised his pupils to find the pronunciation of *son*, *mon*, etc., by cutting off the finals of *song* and *monk*. His example is by no means so unfrequently followed as might be supposed. For instance, the adapter of Ploetze's Course thinks that *sank* is the true pronunciation of *cinq;* that the first syllable of *uncle* is like *un*, and that the *s* in *pleasure* represents *je*. I will not waste more space in order to show how imperfect—nay, how mischievous and misleading—such examples are, by descending into the truly bewildering regions of illustrative pronunciation of 'Pronouncing Dictionaries,' 'French Self-Instructors,' 'Pronouncing Guides,' etc., as illustration of French pronunciation by means of examples taken from the English is a sheer impossibility, even supposing there existed no dialectic variation in the English pronunciation of one and the same word. Certain it is, that pupils whose ears are unable to catch the sounds from the pronunciation of the

master, whose tongues cannot imitate them correctly, and perhaps also who derive no help from their eyes, watching the position of the teacher's lips, will not learn to pronounce correctly in any other way.

On the other hand, the practice of teaching French pronunciation by causing the pupils to imitate that of the teacher, ought not to be carried too far. It ought only to be used to teach the pronunciation of the vowels and consonants and exceptional combinations of them. From the very first the pupils must be led to apply practically what they have learnt in previous lessons; it is only in this manner that they become more than mere speaking dolls. If thus, from the word *père*, the pupil learns the sound of the *è*, he will be able to find by himself the pronunciation of *mère*, *frère*, *colère*, *mène*, *célèbre*, *pèse*, etc.; in the same manner he learns the vowel *a* from *la*, and the pronunciation of *ta*, *sa*, *ma*, etc.; from *le*, the *e* mute, and the pronunciation of *me*, *se*, *te*, *je*, etc.; from *bon*, the pronunciation of *mon*, *ton*, *son*; from *nous*, the pronunciation of *vous*, *trou*, *pour*, etc.; and from *té*, the pronunciation of *blé*, *décédé*, *répété*, etc.

The knowledge thus gained is useful to teach the pronunciation of *et* and *est* by telling the pupils that the *e* in *et* is pronounced like the *é* in *té*, and *est* like the *è* in *père ;* and in a like manner the pronunciation of *ai* as in *j'ai, portai, serai,* and of *mais, portais, serait, haie, paye, peine, reine,* etc.

These few examples will be sufficient, I hope, to show to intelligent masters the way which they ought to take in imparting a correct pronunciation. This way, moreover, offers other advantages ; *it has the effect of rousing the attention of the pupils, who, being thus insensibly and gradually led to look closer to things, learn to think and become self-reliant.*

The teacher must insist upon every word and syllable being distinctly and slowly pronounced ; for the pupils, full of zeal, are often inclined to skip over things in trying to pronounce as quickly as the master does sometimes. Such a zeal, indicating the prosperous condition of the class, is a hopeful sign, but it must nevertheless be checked in a gentle manner. The teacher must impress upon the minds of his scholars, that at first they

ought to pronounce slowly, and that by-and-by they will learn to do so as quickly as he does.

The distinct pausing between the syllables will also much facilitate a correct pronunciation. Ex. *Un-père, l'im-pri-me-rie, un-n'a-mi, tu-as, con-ti-nu-ez, vou-s'a-vez,* etc. In this manner sufficient time is left to the organs of speech to assume the position requisite for the production of the next syllable.

PREPARATION OF THE LESSONS.

THE vocabulary which is placed at the head of each lesson must, of course, be read first, and the pronunciation of the words contained in it be dealt with in accordance with the principles developed in the preceding chapter. As it is of the highest importance that everything be duly explained and thoroughly understood by the pupils before the lesson is committed to memory, or practised by the

tongue, the master must have the vocabulary repeatedly read over to him, especially by the less intelligent members of the class, till he is quite sure that all the pupils know how to pronounce every word of it correctly.

In reading the vocabulary, the pupils should not be allowed to repeat the English meaning of every French word, as the sudden change from one language to the other must embarrass their inexperienced tongues. For the same reason they should also be directed to read the French aloud, without pronouncing the corresponding English words, when committing the vocabulary to memory.

The pronunciation of the vocabulary being duly attended to, explanations and illustrations of the grammatical difficulties of the lesson must be given (*vide* Grammar).

Then the French part of the lesson is carefully read. This task having been accomplished in a satisfactory manner, it is translated, the master reading each sentence, giving thus the pupils an opportunity of hearing it properly pronounced. It is of the highest importance that the translation be found by the pupils themselves, which rule, if always

conscientiously observed, will never be a matter of great difficulty to them. And when the master has here and there to give a hint, he must always do it in such a manner that the pupils may be fairly proud of having done the translation themselves.

'*Thus, by encouraging the pupils, and by developing their intellect, they are led on step by step to overcome greater and more complicated matters that afterwards have to be mastered.*'

The translation of the English portion of the lesson, though principally intended for an exercise on paper, ought to be preceded by a verbal one. The master must, therefore, so divide the time devoted to each lesson as to have sufficient in which to do it properly. However, should he find the time too short, he must at all events single out the most difficult sentences, and translate them with the pupils, so that the task of translating them by themselves on paper may not prove too troublesome to them. This verbal translation is of great importance, '*as it clears the road for the pupils, especially for those of weaker intellect, who would otherwise be com-*

pelled to seek the assistance of their companions, or, what is much worse, be tempted to copy their exercises.'

During the translation of the lessons the master must insist upon proper attention being paid to the work. Pupils must not be allowed to look for words as they are often in the habit of doing, as the search for words which they do not know, and the turning over the leaves of their handbooks, distracts their attention from that which is being done at the moment. The pupils can always manage to translate by assisting each other, and should an appeal to the class fail, the master can step in and supply the deficiency.

Another bad habit which is frequently practised by the pupils is '*the counting-out of the sentences falling to their lot.*' Being thus occupied with the preparation of their own sentences, they lose the benefit they would derive from attending to the translation of the other members of the class. The teacher must strictly suppress any attempt of this sort, and compel each member of the class to attend to the translation of others as carefully as if he had to do it himself.

He must also check the over-readiness of pupils to give assistance to each other, and only allow a pupil to be helped when he is utterly unable to solve the problem by himself. If such trifles—they are often considered as such—are overlooked, they will soon tell on the progress of the class; for the weak and idle members of it are but too ready to avail themselves of such assistance, and end by relying on it entirely. Nor must the pupils be allowed to take notes whilst the translation is going on. The proper places for such annotations are their minds and memories, where they would be useful ornaments, whilst in the margins of their handbooks they have a very different effect. Besides, the pupils, relying on their notes, do not give that attention to what is done in the lesson which they would were they not permitted to make them.

'*Vigilance in checking such little and very natural failings in pupils is also a proof of thorough mastership.*'

GRAMMAR.

At this stage of the study the term 'grammar' must not be understood in the literal sense of the word, as a systematic and connected exposition of the grammatical rules is not aimed at. At present, it only embraces the elementary rules upon which the lessons in the little handbooks are based, as, for instance, the general rule for the formation of the feminine of adjectives; the use of *ce, cet, cette;* the translation of *his, her, its,* and *the Saxon genitive;* the difference between *ce, cet, cette,* on one side, and *celui, celle,* on the other; the difference between *que* and *qui;* the general rules for the formation of the plural of nouns, etc.

Unfortunately, these rules generally receive but little attention, in all probability, on account of their simplicity. Many teachers, fancying them to be as easy to their pupils as they are to themselves, think it quite sufficient to have them read over, perhaps with an ex-

planation which is as little understood as the rule itself, and then committed to memory.

'*The great number of mistakes which the pupils make in their translations, and which are generally attributed to thoughtlessness and stupidity, are but too frequently the result of the teacher's inattention to such trifles as the rules above alluded to.*'

It is not sufficient to put these rules into simple forms which are committed to memory by the little pupils, so that they are able to return a clear and distinct answer when questioned with reference to them. They must be carefully explained first, and then illustrated in as many examples as possible.

In explaining, for instance, the general rule for the formation of the plural of nouns, I should ask my little pupils to compare the singular and plural forms in their books—or, better still, write these forms on the blackboard—and cause them to tell the difference between them. They will not fail to discover, that though there is no difference in the pronunciation, there is in the spelling.

Or, to take another example, viz., the use of *ce*, *cet*, and *cette*, which are only represented

by one word in English. I give these pronouns in conjunction with nouns on the blackboard, and lead the pupils by appropriate questions to find out the rules for applying them correctly.

Many teachers may think this way of proceeding '*a taking too much trouble and a waste of time about these little things.*' To such I remark that, besides the practice such a way of explaining affords to the intellect and eyes of little pupils, they are a means of rendering the lessons interesting and amusing by putting them before the pupils in the shape of riddles. Relying thus on the fondness of children for finding out such little things, I combine utility with amusement.

Other difficulties such as the difference between *qui* and *que*, which occur in the twenty-third lesson of Hall's book, are not so easily explained. It would be more than useless to give the proper grammatical explanation, because young pupils cannot be expected to know the nominative from the accusative. In such instances the teacher must have recourse to little temporary expedients. I overcame the difficulty in this

wise. I told my little pupils that, whenever *which*, *who*, or *whom* are followed by a verb, they are translated by *qui*, in all other cases by *que*. Such explanations do good service till a better and more exact one can be understood.

I cannot help once more pointing out the importance of carefully explaining such rules, for, as simple as they look and as they really are, young pupils experience generally great difficulties in applying them practically when they have not been carefully explained to them. *They may appear to be but mere trifles in the eyes of teachers, but in the eyes of pupils who do not understand them, they look insurmountable obstacles, and thus become the main cause of the indifference, nay, disgust, which pupils evince for the study of French.*

After the explanation of the rules, ample opportunity ought to be afforded for applying them practically in as many examples as possible. This important practice must not be confined merely to words occurring in the lesson in which they are introduced, but they should be applied to any number of them in previous lessons that can be made useful.

The more numerous the examples the more certain the teacher may be that they are entirely digested by the pupils' minds, and have been converted into flesh and blood (if I may use that expression in this instance). Then, and then only, do they become useful to the pupils, and take the shape of guides competent to lead them through the difficult task of translating their exercises; in short, teach them how to do their work without requiring the help of anybody else.

In translating they ought to be frequently recalled to the pupil's memory, by asking the why and the wherefore of things, as, for instance, in the sentence, *Ma plume est plus grande que la tienne*, why *grande* and *la tienne?* What is the masculine of *grande* and *la tienne?* etc. In this manner that part of Hall's book with the heading '*Questions on the Exercises and Grammar*,' may be utilised by inexperienced teachers.

Of the verbs, the pupils need only learn the principal tenses of the regular verbs, and perhaps, also, of some of the more frequently used irregular ones, as *aller*, *sortir*, *dormir*, etc. To give anything besides what

inaccuracies in their own pronunciation, and then they are also compelled to seize and recognise the words with their ears.

Secondly. The vocabulary is worked through by reversing the order in which the words are arranged, the teacher sometimes asking for the French, and at another time for the English. He must come back repeatedly to words which are more difficult to retain or to pronounce than others. In this manner the vocabulary is treated until every word of it is perfectly known and pronounced by the pupils. Then the French exercise is taken in hand, and as it was translated in the last lesson from the book, it is now translated by the ear in the following manner. The teacher pronounces a sentence, which, after having been repeated by several pupils, is then translated. This process is carried on till both pronunciation and translation are done with ease. *This is a very important practice, as through it the pupils are made independent of their books, and thus gradually prepared for conversation.*

The lesson of the day being disposed of, the pupils are then drilled-up in a similar

manner in lessons in which they are deficient. In the repetition of lessons, the teacher must not merely confine himself to asking single words; on the contrary, it is of great utility to introduce combinations of words; as for example, nouns in conjunction with adjectives and pronouns, adjectives with nouns, prepositions with nouns, etc., especially such as serve to illustrate grammatical rules and peculiarities of the French language.

As all this helps to improve the capacity and readiness of the pupils' memories, and keeps them under continual control, the contents of the lessons must become the pupils' property. Their progress being thus ensured, the time taken up by such practice is not wasted.

In schools which depend on visiting masters, and in which, for reasons of economy, the number of lessons is limited, little pupils must receive some help in the preparation of their lessons, and some competent person besides the master must take in hand the drilling-up.

In the repetition and drilling-up of the lessons, forbearance and kindness must be

shown towards those pupils whose utmost efforts do not enable them to keep up with the class. They must not be ridiculed or harshly used on account of their inability, lest they should become timid and get discouraged from making further exertions. By kindly encouraging them to renewed exertions, and helping them on in patience to keep up with the others, the teacher may succeed in getting them over the difficulties which in many instances are only created by their timidity.

In his endeavours to improve the pupil's memory, the teacher must not lose sight of pronunciation. Pupils are often inclined to pronounce things indifferently—for instance, the article—on account of the uncertainty in which they are about the gender of the noun in question. The article ought always to be given with the noun, meaning and gender being thus kept together, the acquisition of both is ensured at the same time. The same applies to the adjective used in connection with nouns.

By giving them always clearly and distinctly, the ear becomes familiar with the

sound, which is a great help to the learner.

Sometimes the vocabulary contains materials which require special attention and treatment, such as, for instance, the numbers. Counting in even and uneven numbers is very useful; but the most successful means to acquaint the pupils with them in a pleasant manner I have always found in mental arithmetic practice. The most lively interest was always manifested by the pupils in trying to do such little sums as: *Quinze et cinq font; deux fois vingt; la quatrième partie de vingt-quatre; un fermier a quarante brebis, il en vend la moitié, combrien lui en restent?* etc.

CONVERSATION.

I DARESAY there are not many teachers of languages who have ever taken the trouble to find out the reasons why conversation offers so many difficulties to their pupils, and

why facility in it is generally only acquired by those who are possessed of superior abilities and perseverance.

Had they taken any pains to find out what the difficulties are which the pupils experience, and tried to devise means by which to overcome them, I am quite confident there would not be that large percentage among their scholars who, after having had lessons and studied industriously for years, are scarcely able to understand and answer the most simple questions. As the case at present stands, little improvement in this respect is to be hoped for; conversation being considered exceptionally difficult, the teachers avoid beginning it, and put it off from one quarter to another. However, as it must be commenced some time, they fancy that the right moment has arrived when the pupils have spelt and read their way through several books, studied the grammar, and learnt mechanically, by heart, a great number of sentences out of phrase-books. Then all at once the teacher begins to talk French, having not the slightest doubt that his pupils understand him, and are able to return answers.

The latter, however, sorely puzzled to make out what the master says, are still more unsuccessful in their efforts to form and pronounce sentences on the spur of the moment. But that is not the worst of the case!

The pupils, being thus without any preparatory practice taken by surprise, are discouraged by the difficulties crowding suddenly upon them. The teacher may, perhaps, try to encourage them by telling them that every beginning is difficult, and that by-and-by they must succeed; but the difficulties are so great, and the first attempts at conversation so wearisome and trying, that in most cases the patience of the pupils and that of teacher as well becomes exhausted, and the practice, instead of being steadily persevered in, is gradually dropped. That is the general and inevitable result if conversation is begun without the necessary preparatory practice.

Are not, then, reading and study of the grammar sufficient to prepare pupils for conversation? My answer is, '*Most decidedly not!*' Pupils may read and study the grammar for years without learning to converse at all, just as they would not acquire a knowledge

of the grammar and proficiency in reading were they to confine themselves solely to the practice of conversation. As reading and grammar require suitable practice and preparation, so does conversation, which presents infinitely greater difficulties than either of the two.

To do away with these abortive attempts to master conversation, pupils must be gradually and surely prepared for it; and how this is to be accomplished I will endeavour to show in the following paragraph, which may fitly be headed

'CONVERSATIONAL EXERCISES.'

For conversation five things are indispensable, viz.:

Firstly. The pupil must be able to understand what is spoken.

Secondly. He must be in possession of a good and sufficient stock of words.

Thirdly. The words must be at his command at the moment they are required.

Fourthly. He must be able to form the necessary grammatical and phraseological combinations; and,

Fifthly. His tongue must be prepared and ready to deliver them promptly and properly.

These requirements, on the fulfilment of which conversation is based, will at once indicate the course which the teacher has to take in order to prepare his pupils for that difficult task; they will also supply the reasons why I insisted, in the previous chapters, on a good pronunciation, careful hearing, drilling-up, and repetition of the lessons.

As regards the first point, '*to understand what is spoken*,' everything depends, of course, on the quickness of the ear, which is, in conversation, what the eye is in reading. By means of the ear the sounds are received, and, through the nerves, conveyed to the brain, where they are interpreted. The interpretation through the medium of the eye differs widely from that of the ear, and affords no help to the ear. Therefore one may be able to read and write French, and yet be unable to understand the simplest spoken questions and sentences. In reading, the sounds of the language are represented by letters which are always the same; besides, as they remain under the eye, the pupil

may take his time in making out a sentence. In speaking, of course the sounds are also the same, but they must be caught as they are pronounced; besides a swifter utterance than usual, a little variation in the accent, and even the different tones and inflections of voices, are quite sufficient to hamper to a great extent ears not thoroughly experienced.

Therefore, to familiarise the ear gradually to the sounds of the French language from the very beginning, is of the highest importance, and enough cannot be done to sharpen the organ by means of which they are conveyed to the mind. The pupil must begin with catching single words, and, as his ear becomes gradually accustomed to these sounds, he will learn to interpret easy combinations of words, then simple sentences, as: J'ai acheté; vous avez vu, etc.; and lastly, longer ones, as they occur in the exercises. This will account for my insisting upon a lesson not being abandoned before the pupils are able to interpret its contents by means of their ears.

But besides what is given in the lessons, a great deal may be done by '*out-of-lesson*

practice,', by which expression I mean the occasional introduction of little questions and answers, as: Comment vous portez-vous? Je vous remercie, monsieur, je me porte bien. Quel age avez-vous? J'ai douze ans. Combien de frères avez-vous? etc.* They must also be taught to observe commands such as: Continuez; faites attention; fermez, ouvrez vos livres; tenez-vous droit; asseyez-vous; finissez; venez ici, etc. I can only point out the way to the teacher, to whose judgment and tact, and, above all, industry, the rest must be left.

With regard to the second point, '*the acquisition of a large stock of vocables*,' the necessity of which I dare say is beyond question, I must remark that, besides the practice afforded in the hearing and repetition of lessons, other vocables may be acquired *en passant*, such as the names of school apparatus and materials, objects met with in walks,

* It is important to explain such sentences properly. For instance, the pupils must be told that the Frenchman says, 'What age have you? I have ten years. I have hunger,' etc.; as they will thus be enabled to use the sentence with other portions of the verb.

or things which, in some way or other, come under the pupil's notice.

Thirdly. That 'the right word be forthcoming whenever wanted,' is also of great importance, as the lack of the proper word always most seriously impedes conversation, and in many cases renders expression of thought impossible. By reading again the chapter containing observations on the hearing and repetition of the lessons, the master will now understand much better the immense value and importance of a careful observance of the principles which are insisted upon therein.

Fourthly. 'The formation of grammatical and phraseological combinations.' It is a great mistake to believe that pupils who can correctly translate on paper, must do so with equal facility by mouth, or form sentences such as the sustaining of a conversation requires. There is a vast difference between the practice on paper, which allows plenty of time for reflection, and when in case of uncertainty, the handbook, the grammar, and dictionary may be consulted, and the mental practice which permits neither of time nor

any other aid. The intellectual powers must, therefore, be gradually prepared and brought up to that standard of quickness required for conversation. And when the formation of grammatical combinations is practised from the very beginning, there will be no difficulty in attaining that end.

At the commencement only easy combinations are given to translate, such as: This tree; that pen; my little pen; my big house; my beautiful sister; this fine house; have you seen? I have bought; etc. The translation of the English part of the lessons is also a good exercise; but as soon as possible the teacher must have recourse to out-of-lesson practice, and cause the pupils to frame little sentences by asking questions, as: Qu'est-ce que je fais? Dites-moi quelque chose d'un cheval? De quelle couleur est l'herbe? Qu'avez-vous acheté? Qu'avez-vous fait aujourd'hui? Comment se porte votre frère? etc. These questions must always be answered by complete sentences. The turning of French sentences as given in the exercises into questions, and affirmative into negative sentences, will also furnish

materials for practice; but complete independence of the book is preferable.

With regard to '*the suppleness and readiness of the tongue*,' about which much has been said already under the head '*pronunciation*,' I add that the practice for obtaining fluency may be combined with that of the ear and the formation of grammatical combinations. Mind, tongue, and ear thus starting from the most elementary things, acquire by degrees that elasticity, quickness, and readiness which are required for conversation.

In finishing this chapter, I dare say it is hardly necessary to point out that *conversational exercises, repetition, and grammar are not to be treated separately in practice, as I have done in theory. All these different practices are so interwoven and interlaced with each other, depend so much on mutual support, that their combination is an absolute necessity. But what I wanted most particularly to demonstrate in this chapter, is that conversational exercises connected with and based upon the hearing and repetition of the lessons in the manner described, far from impeding the*

progress of the pupils, are, on the contrary, a means of ensuring their success in the study of the French language.

THE EXERCISES.

THE lessons in the handbooks consist generally of two exercises. The first of the two —the French part—is intended to illustrate the practical application of the vocabularies and rules which are given at the head of the lesson. The second—the English part—is intended for a translation-exercise on paper, and is the means of affording the pupils an opportunity of practising by themselves the application of the words and rules introduced by the lesson.

The French part is also very often given to little pupils for a translation-exercise on paper, which, I think, is not a very commendable practice. As it is easy, it is often done carelessly, and in a great hurry. I believe the careful translation of it at sight as

a reading exercise, as spoken of in the preparation of the lessons, and its interpretation by means of the ear, as mentioned in the repetition of lessons, are quite sufficient. Instead of having it translated on paper, I should have it carefully copied. This practice would give the pupils an opportunity of becoming more intimately acquainted with the spelling of French words and the grammatical combinations embodied in the exercise, than is possible by mere reading and translation. Besides being thus a means of improving the pupils' orthographical knowledge, and insensibly enriching their memory with French forms and phrases, it is also to a certain extent a translation-exercise, as few pupils would copy it without translating it mentally, especially if the oral translation has been properly attended to.

In this manner it may be used at first, but as soon as possible the French part must be utilised in other ways. It must be employed in causing pupils to change questions into answers, and affirmative sentences into negative ones, and *vice versâ*. First, the changing of questions and answers is practised, and

then the transformation of affirmative and negative sentences. The teachers need not wait till the interrogative forms, necessitating the repetition of the pronoun corresponding with the subject and the negative forms, are introduced.

The English part of the lessons must, as I have already mentioned in the chapter 'Preparation of the Lessons,' be properly prepared, and passages and sentences offering greater difficulties than others well looked to, before trusting the pupils with its translation on paper.

THE EXERCISE-BOOKS.

THE pupils should be taught to keep their books in a nice, neat condition, and to write the exercises legibly and carefully.

The proper condition of the exercise-book and the careful execution of the work are closely connected with each other. This,

however, appears rarely to be properly understood. For, unfortunately, pupils are generally allowed to scribble away as they like in books—nay, often on scraps of paper—which neither they, nor anybody else, care to look at, blotted and besmeared, often adorned with hurried ink sketches; sometimes they abound in pencil-writing, the pupils just suiting their own convenience in this respect, and in many cases it is a compound of all sorts of exercises—in the beginning French, in the middle Euclid, and at the end Latin, or perhaps something else. To anyone not initiated into its ingenious and mysterious arrangements, such an exercise-book is a perfect labyrinth; and as to the mistakes and their corrections, well, the less said about them the better.

Such books do not argue well for the pupils' progress, for the exercise-book is the mirror reflecting the attention which the pupils give to their studies. Pupils who do not choose to write their exercises well, show that they do not entertain much respect for their master, whom they compel to make out their scribbling the best way he can, and that they

do not attach much importance to the instruction they receive from him.

Need I comment much on the importance of a neatly kept exercise-book? A neatly kept book not only makes a good impression upon the person examining it, but it will not contain many mistakes; *it proves that its owner is under careful training, and takes a pride in doing his lessons creditably.*

CORRECTION OF EXERCISES.

WHEN the pupils do their exercises well, and keep their books in a proper state, the master, on his part, is bound to correct them with extreme care. By showing thus his approval of the pupils' productions, he stimulates their zeal, and encourages them to continue in the proper path. Nothing is more derogatory to the master's authority, more effectually damps the ardour of the pupils, and stifles their zealous endeavours to be careful in their exer-

cises, than the careless correction of them on the part of the master. It is an irksome and disagreeable task, to be sure; but a conscientious master will not shrink from performing it carefully. He must set his pupils a good example if he wishes them to be careful. Carefulness on the master's part is, however, necessary on other grounds. Pupils will now and then compare notes; they soon find out when mistakes have been corrected in one book and left standing in another. Nor must he draw long thick strokes under the mistakes in marking them, or, when in a passion, handle the exercise-books in a disdainful manner. Even should there be reasons for his being angry, he ought never to fling the books about; by acting thus, he attains nothing beyond making himself appear ridiculous in the eyes of the pupils.

The correction of the exercises should be made with red or blue ink, to render the mistakes more conspicuous. This deprives the pupils who have forgotten to correct them of the excuse of not having seen them. Besides, pupils who are anxious to keep their books in good order, do not like to have

many blue or red marks in their exercises, and to such the conspicuous red or blue will be an incentive to greater carefulness.

Every possible facility ought to be given to the pupils for the correction of the mistakes. For this purpose different marks must be used to indicate the nature of the mistakes. If orthography has been sinned against, perhaps a single dash may be used; a grammatical mistake might be indicated by a double dash, an omission by an angle, misplacement of words by an interrogation, etc.

The best way of correcting exercises would be to do so in the presence of the pupil, who, when the mistake is marked and pointed out to him, must tell what is wrong. The exercise thus gone through is handed to him for correction. This way, however, can only be adopted in small classes and with private pupils.

In large classes another way may be advisable, viz.: The master gives the translation, and the pupils, looking over their own exercises, mark the mistakes themselves. Difficult words are spelt, and grammatical difficulties dwelt upon. An exchange of

exercise-books among the pupils during the process of correction is also of great utility. In adopting this course, the master must keep a strict watch that every member of the class does his duty properly; he must now and then inspect the books, especially, those of notorious idlers.

It is a good plan to number the mistakes. There are several reasons for its adoption. The number of mistakes is a censure that makes greater impression on the minds of the pupils than any other expressed in words; and then, if the corrections are numbered accordingly, the master is enabled to see at a glance that they have been properly executed.

As regards the corrections of the mistakes by the pupils, I don't think it would be much amiss if the master were to insist upon the writing out of the whole sentence that contains a mistake, however trifling it may be.

GENERAL REMARKS ON CONVERSATION.

I HAVE often had an opportunity of observing that pupils in well-conducted classes show an earnest desire to express themselves in French—and it is quite natural that they should—this desire must be fostered as much as possible. It is quite a treat to notice what a cheering effect it has upon the little scholars when they can make out a question or something that is said to them, and how proud they feel when they can answer in French. It is, however, a great mistake to imagine that this inclination of the pupils' may be increased by compelling them to learn by heart sentences or dialogues as found in manuals and conversation-books.

As the pupils do not understand the grammatical construction of the sentences contained in these books, the committing of them to memory becomes quite a mechanical practice, and, of course, an almost useless one, as,

by forgetting one single word, the whole sentence becomes useless. That way of teaching conversation makes the task very easy to the teacher, but very difficult and profitless to the pupil. It is a system of mere dry drudgery—I cannot style it otherwise—which was invented by teachers who did not know how to teach. From such sentences or dialogues pupils may learn a great deal when they understand them and know how to handle them. But as long as they have not grasped the principles of the grammar, and are unable to apply them freely and intelligently, the grammatical construction of these sentences remains a dead letter to the pupils, and their appropriation is a mechanical, useless, and wearisome practice. Idiomatic turns may be insensibly acquired by attentive reading, and the out-of-lesson practice as explained in the chapter on 'Conversation.'

Native professors frequently require their pupils to commit poetry to memory, and, judging from the general use of this practice, they seem to attach great importance to it. I wonder if they can give any other reason

for practising that dry tongue and memory-exercise, except that it is commonly practised in French schools, and is there regarded as the medium through which to acquaint French children with the beautiful productions of their native poets. Now, in all likelihood, they have come to the conclusion that what is useful in France, must be equally so in England. I question, however, very much whether French children who understand what they learn by heart, relish and appreciate very much that poetry they have to commit to memory—they learn it, because they are compelled to do so—and now what must be the feelings and difficulties of English children, who, having but a very imperfect knowledge of French, are compelled to commit to memory things they do not understand at all? Could anyone have invented a more cruel and wearisome task? I doubt it. I do not know what hard labour is to a prisoner, but I am sure oakum-picking and treading the mill would bear no approximate comparison to what such a terribly stupid task must be to the gay and frolicsome nature of a child.

Should, however, a French master be so deeply enamoured of his native poetry that he considers it indispensable his pupils should learn portions of it by heart, then let him try to translate it with his pupils literally, so that they may reasonably be supposed to understand its meaning; but as the task of translating poetry is a very difficult one, he had better desist from the practice of tormenting his pupils with his favourite poets, if not altogether, anyhow till they understand them without a literal translation, which will always be a very unsatisfactory production—a mere parody on the original.

DICTATION.

THE principal worth of dictation consists in its causing the pupils to write French without giving them an opportunity of consulting their dictionary or handbook in case of doubt, and thus compelling them to depend on their memory and grammatical knowledge.

Though it would not be well to neglect it altogether, its frequent practice is not advisable, as it is without adequate results. I daresay it is, on account of its easiness, very well liked by the pupils, and, perhaps, still better by the masters. Pupils have plenty of opportunity of improving their orthography in the various duties which the repetition and correction of exercises imposes. As it takes up too much time, I should only make occasional use of it to see how the pupils manage without their books; perhaps, also, to vary now and then the general routine of the lessons.

When used, it ought to be proceeded with in the following manner:

In order to make it more than a mere spelling exercise, not less than a sentence should be given out by the master. Before being taken down, it is repeated by several pupils till all are supposed to know it perfectly, so that no pretext whatever is afforded for asking questions or looking over the books of others. When written, it ought to be read and translated, and lastly, corrected, by spelling the most difficult words in it.

And well they may! For the grammar, with all its rules and their numerous exceptions, must look to them like a perfect labyrinth. However, the task looks far more formidable than it really is, and pupils who have acquired a sound preparatory knowledge of the elements of the grammar in the first course, who have been taught to bring the resources of their minds to bear upon subjects, and in this manner learnt to grapple with difficulties, will find it far easier than it appeared to them at first. Success in the systematic study of grammar will therefore, in a great measure, depend upon the earnestness and industry displayed during the First Course.

As I have already pointed out, under the head '*Grammar*' in the First Course, the appropriation of the contents of the grammar cannot be accomplished with the aid of the memory alone. If once a rule is thoroughly understood by the pupils, it becomes at the same time, almost without any exertion whatever, a fixture in the dwelling of memory. *The mere learning by heart of grammatical rules is of little, if any, practical use; and the master who relies solely on the memory of his*

pupils, is like the man who built his house on the sand.

The proper explanation and illustration of the rules are, therefore, the principal duties of the master in teaching grammar. These explanations and illustrations will be more effective if the pupils are caused to lay their books aside, upon which they are too much inclined to rely, as they are seldom over-anxious to strain their intellectual powers; for experience shows that, however idle pupils may be in learning by heart, they are still more averse to thinking. The master, of course, ought to know his lesson well, the preparation of which will be to him but a matter of a few minutes, so that he is able to lay his book aside too. By thus carefully explaining the rules, and illustrating them by numerous examples, perhaps on the blackboard, they will appear in quite a different light to the pupils from what they do in the book. Besides, the ease and off-hand manner with which the master is thus able to treat rules, has something so insinuating and fascinating to the pupils, that they will most willingly follow the master in his expositions; *he is to them*

more than a severe, detestable taskmaster—he is their guide.

Now take the reverse! What must the rebellious little pupils think of a master who is continually compelled to fall back upon his book? They will come to the conclusion that the master does not know the lesson himself.

In many cases the ground has already been cleared and prepared in the First Course. For instance: The pupils are already acquainted with the rules for the formation of the plural of substantives, and they have now only to learn the exceptions.

The exercises which are given in the book are first translated on paper. But after having been corrected, they must also be given to be prepared for verbal translation, which the pupils must be able to render without the least hesitation, to show that they have mastered the lesson thoroughly.

Before concluding this chapter, I must refer to a practice which I think is yet very much resorted to by inexperienced teachers, viz., to put handbooks of grammar in the hands of beginners. I have frequently met

pupils eyeing, with a feeling akin to despair, their De Fiva's 'French Grammar,' or Otto's 'Conversational Course for the Study of German.' These books ought never to be put into the hands of beginners—even of adults; an introductory course is always advisable—nay, necessary.

THE VERBS.

THERE are other things besides the rules and their exceptions which it is absolutely necessary to commit to memory—the verbs, for instance. They are generally considered very difficult by those who teach and learn French, but the task of learning them is by no means so difficult as is generally supposed.

The great errors committed are:

Firstly. That no explanation is given of the formation and structure of their conjugation; and,

Secondly. That not enough time and practice is given to the pupils to become thoroughly acquainted with one verb before commencing another.

Explanation is here limited to certain practical hints which facilitate the task to the pupil's memory. As these explanations are of great value if properly understood, it is one of the most important duties of the teacher—aye, far more important than is generally supposed—to initiate the pupils into the secrets of the formation of the conjugations.

The table of terminations must always be made the basis of the study of the regular verbs, and, to a certain extent, that of the irregular ones as well. As it is not given in every handbook, the teacher would do well to cause the pupils to write it out (*vide* Table of Terminations, on pp. 107 and 108).

Table of the Endings of the Four Regular Conjugations.

Infinitive	er	ir	evoir	re
Particip. Present	ant	issant	evant	ant
Past	é	i	u	u
Indicative Present	e es e ons ez ent	is is it issons issez issent	ois ois oit evons evez oivent	s s — ons ez ent
Imparfait	ais ais ait ions iez aient	issais issais issait issions issiez issaient	evais evais evait evions eviez evaient	ais ais ait ions iez aient
Parfait define (Preterite)	ai as a âmes âtes èrent	is is it îmes îtes irent	us us ut ûmes ûtes urent	is is it îmes îtes irent

TABLE OF THE ENDINGS OF THE FOUR REGULAR CONJUGATIONS (*continued*).

Future	erai eras era erons erez eront	irai iras ira irons irez iront	evrai evras evra evrons evrez evront	rai ras ra rons rez ront
Conditional Present	erais erais erait erions eriez eraient	irais irais irait irions iriez iraient	evrais evrais evrait evrions evriez evraient	rais rais rait rions riez raient
SUBJUNCTIVE Present	e es e ions iez ent	isse isses isse issions issiez issent	oive oives oive evions eviez oivent	e es e ions iez ent
Imperfect	asse asses ât assions assiez assent	isse isses ît issions issiez issent	usse usses ût ussions ussiez ussent	isse isses ît issions issiez issent
Imperative	— e e ons ez ent	— is isse issons issez issent	— ois oive evons evez oivent	— s e ons ez ent

It is not necessary to compel the pupils to learn the terminations mechanically by heart, as by conjugating verbs with the aid of the table of endings, they will be insensibly acquired by the pupils. Nevertheless, the teacher must make sure that the pupils know them perfectly well, and, when necessary, extra pressure must be put upon them. To facilitate the task, the regular recurrence of the endings *ons*, *ez*, and *ent*, in the three persons plural of all the tenses, with the sole exception of the third person plural of the future, which ends in *ont*, and the first and second persons plural of the preterite, and that the second person of the singular ends always in *s*, with the exception of the imperative of the first conjunction, the endings *ions*, *iez*, characterising the imperfect, conditional, and subjunctive, must be also pointed out to the pupils.

Of course all the four conjugations are not learnt at once. The one ending in *er* is first taken in hand; and when that is thoroughly known, the others in their turn. The acquisition of them will not be of much difficulty, if sufficient attention be paid to the affinity

that exists between the tenses of the different conjugations, as given in the following table of 'Pure Terminations.'

TABLE OF PURE TERMINATIONS OF FRENCH VERBS.

Infinitive	er	ir	evoir	re
Present part.	ant	issant	evant	ant
Past part.	é	i	u	u
INDIC. Present singular	e, es, e	s, s, t	s, s, t	s, s, –
Plural	ons, ez, ent			
Imperfect,	ais, ais, ait, ions, iez, aient.			
Preterite	ai	i or u s		
	as	„ s		
	a	„ t		
	âmes	„ ^ mes		
	âtes	„ ^ tes		
	èrent	„ rent		
Future	rai, ras, ra, rons, rez, ront.			
Conditional	rais, rais, rait, rions, riez, raient.			
SUBJUNC. Present	e, es, e, ions, iez, ent.			
Imperfect	e, es, ^t, ions, iez, ent			
Imperative singular	e,	s		
	e,	e		
Plural	ons, ez, ent.			

The practice of conjugating on paper is scarcely necessary, and ought never to be carried beyond the writing out of a model verb. The verbal practice, first with and then without the table of terminations, is the

principal exercise for becoming thoroughly acquainted with the conjugations.

In the verbal practice, the following course should be taken :

Firstly. The tenses are repeated in the usual order, without translation, for the purpose of teaching the pupils the pronunciation, and to make sure that they learn the linking of the root to the ending.

Secondly. The pupils are required to give single persons, as for instance : Second person, singular present ; third person, plural future, etc.

Thirdly. The master gives the French and the pupils the English, and *vice versâ.*

Fourthly. The negative ; and,

Fifthly. Interrogative forms are introduced.

The practice of finding the infinitive from the different persons, which is of great importance for reading, must not be neglected. It might be classed under '*thirdly.*' S. Cobbett's 'French Verbs and Exercises' are recommended for further practice.

THE IRREGULAR VERBS.

THE study of the irregular verbs should be based on that of the four regular conjugations.

The French language contains nearly four hundred irregular and defective verbs, which may be grouped under about fifty heads. Some grammarians have contrived to reduce the whole number of irregular verbs to something like fifty, by considering every verb 'regular' whose derivative tenses can be formed regularly from their primitive tenses, with the help of the table of endings. However, I do not think that reducing the number of irregular verbs is simplifying the difficulty, for whatever is gained by shortening is lost in clearness and lucidity. The endeavours to limit the irregular verbs to the smallest possible number are prompted, in a great measure, by the desire to save time. It may be well to do so with adults who want to finish the course in a shorter time, and where

a necessity for compressing matters as much as possible exists; but at schools it is better to deal with the verbs in detail. The time spent in studying a verb is not wasted, for by so doing the pupils gain experience and become skilful in conjugating others.

The old-fashioned way of merely reading the verb through, as given in the handbook, and causing it to be committed to memory, is a very stupid one, as it is only a mechanical one, and does not give the pupils an insight into the construction of its conjugation. It appeals only to the memory, and does not utilise the power of the intellect. The following I have always found to be the most practical method:

Ex. *Aller—s'en aller—aller chercher—aller faire qch.*

The pupils will not have much difficulty in forming the participles, preterite and imperfect, indicative and subjunctive, by being told that they are regular. The present indicative, subjunctive, and imperative, must of course be given, perhaps in writing on the blackboard. Of the conditional and future, only the first persons need be given, as the

remainder of these tenses can be easily supplied by the pupils, *vivâ voce.* The teacher having in this manner explained the conjugation of the verb, and satisfied himself that the pupils can form and pronounce without hesitation the different tenses, *aller chercher* and *aller faire qch.* are taken in hand, and a practice similar to that recommended for the study of the regular verbs is gone through.

The verb *s'en aller* requires especial treatment, and, on account of its difficulty, ought to be written out by the pupils. Thus *aller* and *s'en aller* would occupy two lessons at the very least. When the pupils know well how to conjugate *s'en aller*, the teacher gives sentences in which the verb *aller* and its components occur. Before doing this, special explanations are given of the omission of *y* before future and conditional—thus : *j'irai*—I shall go there ; not *j'y irai ;* that *va* takes *s* when followed by *en* or *y*, as in *vas-y* and *vas en savoir des nouvelles*, and that *aller faire qch.* is only used in the present and imperfect indicative.

These sentences are pronounced by the teacher and translated by the pupils, the

teacher writing and explaining on the blackboard words unknown to the pupils. The translation of every sentence thus placed before the pupils is written down by them, and for the next lesson retranslated and prepared for a verbal translation. Thus the pupils learn not only the conjugation of the verb, but also its application for practical purposes.

Of course it will take a long time—perhaps six months—to go through all the groups of irregular verbs, but the labour will not be a barren one.

'*The pupils get in this manner a firm hold of the irregular verbs, learn to apply them practically, and, by translating and retranslating the model sentences, prepare for reading, conversation, and composition.*'

READING.

THIS chapter brings me to one of the most important duties in the teaching of languages. For reading is not only the medium through which a good pronunciation is furthered, through which the practical application and proper use of the vocables is shown, but it also acquaints the student more intimately with the peculiar turns and construction of a language, and discloses to him those treasures which the genius of other nations has accumulated in their literature. Besides imparting pleasant facts, it is an inexhaustible fountain, at which the student may renew, replenish, and improve his knowledge. It is an attainment within the reach of every scholar, and does not, like conversation, require the constant presence of another person.

As, however, none but attentive readers can derive the above enumerated benefits, it is to be deplored that the importance of

reading is generally so little understood; the teacher, '*instead of teaching his pupils how to read by compelling them to make proper use of their intellect, thinks and reads for them.*' To be better understood: Instead of compelling their pupils to exert themselves, and leading them by judicious aid and hints to grasp and find the meaning of the reading lesson, the teachers give, whenever the pupils cannot make out at once the meaning of a sentence, the translation themselves, perhaps with the intention to save time.

There is nothing more useless—nay, pernicious—than this hurried and superficial way of treating the subject, as it does not give the students the shadow of a chance to become attentive and thinking readers. Relying on the master's assistance, they make no effort to understand the reading lessons, and do no more than repeat mechanically the translation as furnished by their instructor, and of which they retain as much as the memory can lay hold of in the hurry of the proceedings. The result of this way of teaching reading is that, when the pupils are left to themselves, they are as helpless as babies. The idle thinkers

take to a kind of guessing; they learn to make shots at the meaning; in fact, acquire a knowledge which only serves to disappoint them and makes them appear occasionally ridiculous—very ridiculous indeed.

But this course in reading is a very agreeable one to both master and pupils. The former may dispense with all mastership and skill in teaching, and then it saves him a deal of wearisome toil from which conscientious masters would not shrink; the latter, who have, generally speaking, no inclination to make extra exertions and to grapple with difficulties unless forced to do so, are never particularly anxious to dive into and explore that ocean of difficulties, which is placed before them in the shape of the reading-book.

A pupil thus taught runs with astounding swiftness, but very small benefit, through a number of reading lessons of which he knows as much as a traveller does of countries which he has passed through by rail, and who, on the strength of his small experience, flies at the most ludicrous conclusions. To make the student's course through a book useful

and instructive to him, it must resemble travelling on foot. As the pedestrian, in his toilsome and slow progress, frequently halts, that he may examine and acquaint himself with the features of the country and the customs of its inhabitants, so the thoughtful reader, in his slow but steady progress, has time and leisure to give that patient attention to the contents of the reading-book which they require.

After these preliminary remarks, I come to the practical side of the matter. The two principal points which must be kept in view are: *Pronunciation—Fluency*, and *Understanding or translation of the lessons.*

PRONUNCIATION—FLUENCY.

NOTHING is more necessary for retaining that correct pronunciation which the pupil has acquired in the first course, and developing it into fluency—no better means exists for eradicating a bad accent, than careful reading aloud. Even those who go to France to learn the language among the natives, would do well to take reading lessons, for it is a great mistake to imagine '*that one cannot help learning and imitating the pronunciation of the natives correctly by constantly hearing it.*' It requires considerable practice before one learns to imitate correctly, and before the ear can be trusted with the guardianship of the organs of speech; this practice reading, far better than conversation, supplies. Many deceive themselves in this point. They think that hearing is all that is required. Taking '*au pied de la lettre*' the polite Frenchman's 'Vous parlez très-bien,' they boast of a pure accent of which they often

have not the slightest idea. What is the cause of such ridiculous incongruities, and who is to be blamed for them? Nobody but the self-willed learner who fancied that no other master besides the general French public was wanted to ensure his success.

The pupils have now arrived at a stage when they must earnestly try to become independent readers. They must learn to observe closely, and how *se tirer d'affaire* when they have to solve difficulties by themselves. In this task they will be much assisted by the general pronunciation rules which they were taught in the first course; besides these, however, others are to be acquired, as for instance, the exceptional and *quasi* arbitrary pronunciation which the French give to the singular and plural of some substantives, as *œuf*, *bœuf*, *nerf*, etc.; or of the adjective *tous*, when not followed by the substantive, number, adjective, or pronoun, as in the following sentences: Ces livres je les ai tous lu; tous tant que nous sommes; ils arrivèrent tous la même nuit; pour le salut de tous; chacun pour tous, etc. —or *plus*, *sens*, *gens*, etc. These rules must

be carefully expounded by the master whenever they make their appearance in the course of the reading lessons.

Ex. *Plus.*

The *s* in *plus* is pronounced when followed by *que*, or when occurring at the end of a sentence, as in: J'en sais *plus que* lui—il en obtînt *plus que* vous—c'est un joueur; il y *a plus*, c'est un fripon—le roi vous donne cette terre; *de plus*, il vous ennoblit—je me suis ennuyé tant *et plus*—je jouerai encore une partie, *sans plus*—la religion est nécessaire, je dis *plus*, elle est indispensable—on lui a donné tout ce qui lui était dû, et mille francs *en plus:* but when plus represents a noun the *s* is not heard, even when followed by *que*, as in: *Le plus* que je puisse faire; as also in non plusque; je ne me fie pas à lui; non plus qu'à son frère.

The *s* in *plus* is also pronounced when it has the meaning of *besides*, in addition, as in: Plus, une douzaine de chaises—plus, la somme de quinze francs.

In the words *plus-que-parfait* and *plus-petition*, the *s* of *plus* is heard too.

Such and similar rules are indispensable in

assisting pupils to overcome exceptional difficulties; but the general difficulties can only be mastered by the pupils in listening attentively to the master's reading, and also to that of other pupils. By diligent attention, the general rules of pronunciation become thus firmly fixed in the minds and ears of the pupils.

The progress of the pupils must not be calculated by the number of pages and chapters, as a single sentence or paragraph thoroughly mastered will be of more value than a whole chapter heedlessly slurred over. Therefore no sentence must be left until every pupil can read it correctly.

The master must likewise advise the pupils to read aloud carefully by themselves. This repeated reading over of lessons must not be believed unnecessary as involving much useless dry labour. It is, on the contrary, very much to be recommended, as it improves the pronunciation, promotes fluency, and practises the ear. But besides these advantages, it affords an opportunity of becoming intimately acquainted with the formation of sentences; it facilitates the appropriation

of new vocables and whole sentences; in short, it is the only way to understand lessons thoroughly.

THE TRANSLATION OF THE READING LESSONS.

THE translation must be executed in accordance with the principles laid down in the preparatory course. Before the pupils are requested to translate a sentence, the master must make sure that they know the meaning of every word. In the beginning, a literal translation (word for word), answers the purpose admirably; because, besides teaching the meaning of each word, it gives an insight into the peculiar construction of sentences. It also accustoms the pupils to do their work in a thorough manner, and prevents them from getting into the habit of doing mere guesswork. Of course this plan is abandoned by degrees, till at last the literal translation is

limited to vocables and combinations of them which are new to the pupils.

It is of the highest importance that '*after the literal translation, the meaning of every sentence is given in good English.*' The teacher must also avail himself of every opportunity of recalling to the minds of the pupils grammatical rules.

In order to make the pupils attentive and thinking translators, the teacher must compel them to make use of their intellectual powers, and insist upon their finding the meaning of words and sentences whenever they are able to do so. In speaking of words whose meaning they can find, I allude to certain substantives and adjectives which are spelt alike in both languages, but differ in pronunciation, as: Fable, place, préface, race, docile, excellent, etc., and others which, by changing their terminations, differ in spelling as well as pronunciation, such as: Militaire, victoire, faveur, fameux, constance, etc. The first will give but little trouble, their pronunciation being the only difficulty; but the latter want more attention and discernment to be recognised in their foreign garb and sound.

The teacher must also point out to the pupils the similarity that exists among verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs descending from the same root, as: La guerre, le guerrier, la guerrière, guerroyer—combattre, combat, combattant—courage, courageux, courageusement.

New vocables which occur in the reading lessons must be learnt by heart, and heard just in the same way as those of the lessons in the preparatory course. In committing them carefully to memory, the pupil's stock of vocables receives valuable additions. Much facility is afforded to the pupils for this purpose, by giving '*lexicographic notes*' in connection with words occurring in the reading lessons.

Ex. *Libre*, la liberté, libéral, le libérateur, la libératrice.

L'envie, envié, envier, envieux, avoir envie de, à l'envi (ils travaillent à l'envi).

Accuser, l'accusé, l'accusation, l'accusateur, l'accusatrice, on l'accuse de vol, je vous accuse la réception de votre lettre, ce fait l'accuse, les apparences, accusent sa mauvaise intention.

Perhaps it would also not be amiss to give, whenever a word has several meanings, the most important ones, and cause the pupils to pick out the one that is to be used in the translation of the sentence in which it occurs.

Reading taught thus will at first be a very slow and wearisome task, but it will only be such for a short time. Pupils trained in this manner cannot help gaining soon the skill and experience that will facilitate and abridge it.

THE READING-BOOK.

THE contents of a really useful reading-book must be within reach of the reader's intellect; they must be interesting to stimulate his zeal, and furnish materials for every day's conversation, such as small stories, descriptions of things, scenes, and events of daily occurrence, pictures and stories from natural history, and short extracts from history.

These tales and descriptions ought to be very short and extremely simple in construction for beginners, so that it is possible to finish them in one or two lessons. This is very important, for long reading lessons exhaust the patience of beginning readers. Short lessons afford frequent opportunities for resting; besides, each new lesson brings new interest, and rouses the expectation and zeal of the pupils.

These conditions are but rarely complied with. In most schools we find in use reading-books which are far beyond the understanding of pupils, such as 'Telemachus,' 'Charles XII.,' 'Alfred the Great,' 'Picciola,' and others selected by examiners for some incomprehensible reason or other of their own. Indeed, it is difficult to find a reason wherewith to justify the selection of certain books for examination at all; certain it is, that much harm has been done in this manner, as schools are either compelled to use these books or induced to adopt them for teaching purposes, arguing that the choice of the learned examiners cannot be wrong. Thus it happens that one or the other of these books is often

put into the hands of beginners by inexperienced teachers. Now fancy children being compelled to read their way through books like the above. Why, they must loathe the very sight of them. The first, for instance, gives, with the exception of a few interesting facts, long dialogues, speeches, admonitions, and exhortations, which must put the patience of any reader to the severest test; the second, certainly a great improvement upon the first, contains a mass of political facts and transactions of the most intricate and perplexing kind, which cannot be of much interest to a reader who is not well versed in Russian, Polish, and German history. Even 'Alfred the Great,' though a book well adapted to the English character, illustrating, as it does, one of the most brilliant periods of early English history, is not a book suitable for beginners. It contains but few interesting facts and lessons applicable to daily life, and therefore is far more unsuitable for teaching purposes than 'Charles XII.', and, perhaps, 'Telemachus.' 'Picciola' is but another addition to the list of useless reading books.

All these books are much too long for the

slow progress of beginning readers. 'Charles XII.' and 'Alfred the Great' are historical essays; 'Telemachus' was written for the edification and education of a dauphin, who I hope derived much benefit from it; and 'Picciola' is only an additional proof of the ingenuity of man to spin out a few simple facts into a most uninteresting, wearisome tale.

The aim of the first reading lessons, and reading lessons generally, is not to cause the pupils to make historical researches, or to imbue them with noble and lofty sentiments, and to instil into their hearts patience and resignation—it is to teach them to read French.

There are some very nice books in the *Bibliothèque rose illustrée*, as 'Les Contes des Frères Grimm,' beautifully translated from the German by Baudry; 'Les Contes de Fées,' by Perrault; and 'Mdme. Ségur,' 'Conte's choisis,' par Hauff Anderson, etc. But even these should be preceded by a little book of shorter stories, extracts from Buffon's 'Natural History,' short historical sketches, and other useful and interesting materials.

I should not recommend such books as

Delille's 'De Fivas Beauties des Ecrivains des Français,' and others, for first reading books, as they contain mostly lengthy extracts from 'Telemachus,' 'Gil Blas,' and Molière's plays, which, incomplete in themselves, cannot interest readers very much. The best sample of a first reading-book is given in 'Easy French Lessons for Translation and Reading,' at the end of Havet's 'First French Book,' and in his 'Introduction à la Langue Française,' at the beginning of his larger work, with the exception, however, of that part which introduces the reader to 'Bon Mots et Mots plaisants,' of which Frenchmen appear to be as fond as commercial travellers and 'Christy minstrels' of conundrums and puns.

Even in reading, poetry ought to be avoided as much as possible with beginners on account of the difficulties its translation offers, and of its little value for teaching purposes. I should think that the first attempt to translate poetry with pupils must convince teachers that the best translation is but the mere shadow of the original. The fact is: it is impossible to render the beauty of poetry

adequately in prose; *its charms may be felt, but cannot be translated.* The study of French poetry can only be profitable and interesting to students who have a thorough knowledge of the language.

THE VOCABULARY.

THE proper place of the vocabulary is at the end of the book, where it forms an appendix arranged on the same principles as dictionaries. In adopting this course, the pupils are from the very beginning accustomed to read with the aid of a dictionary. Footnotes at the end of each lesson or page are not a thing to be recommended, the pupils being generally too much inclined to rely on them.

I think the best plan would be to dispense with vocabularies altogether, and give at the end of each lesson the necessary vocables with the addition of lexicographic notes,

which the pupils enter in a book kept for that purpose. The copying of the vocables would be a means to acquaint them with their orthography, and facilitate the task of committing them to memory.

Books arranged on the principles of *French at sight*, and *interlineal translations* —the latter form being still more acceptable to idle students—are highly objectionable. They save the scholars the trouble of thinking out passages, foster habits of idleness and carelessness, and consequently do a great deal of harm. The clever authors of these books may look with complacency and pride at the wonderful inventions of theirs calculated to make French easy. Aye, easy, indeed, are the lessons given in their books; who could find them otherwise, as their translation is given? But how grievous will be the disappointment of those who, elated by their success in the above-mentioned books, go beyond those easy reading lessons, and when they find that there exists some terribly hard French besides.

CONVERSATIONAL EXERCISES.

As I have already remarked in the chapter, '*General Remarks on Conversation*,' it is a very erroneous idea to believe that conversation may be acquired by merely learning by heart strings of sentences as given in manuals and conversation books. 'How can it be wrong to commit sentences to memory? How can pupils get hold of them, unless they learn them by heart? Surely there cannot be any harm in doing so!' I hear my learned brethren exclaim. 'To be sure, there could not be much harm in it,' I reply; 'if the sentences were always judiciously selected, duly explained, and if, in addition, opportunities were given to the pupils to apply them practically.'

Now it is exactly because these very important—nay, indispensable conditions—are not complied with, that it turns to be a stupid and senseless practice. What is the benefit

the pupils derive from it? None whatever; for these sentences, not being understood, are sooner forgotten than learnt, not to mention the reluctance with which the scholars sit down to such a mechanical task, and the trouble they have in accomplishing it. But suppose these sentences are not forgotten at once, of what service are they? They are like clumsy and badly chosen ornaments, which, if dispensed with, would give to a room, house, or garden, a far more cheerful aspect; in short, they are not only quite superfluous, but hurtful.

Of course the learned professors will remark that the pupils cannot help understanding these sentences, as their translation is given. But this is exactly the point where the mistake lies. What the pupil wants, is something materially different from that translation: '*it is the explanation of the grammatical form it embodies.*' How can these sentences be useful in practice? How can they serve as models, unless their grammatical construction is thoroughly understood and practically applied?

To give more weight to my arguments, I

refer my readers to a celebrated authority, Dr. Ollendorf. His handbook cannot be called a grammar; it is, in reality, nothing more than a guide to conversation on a large scale. I abstain from saying anything in praise of his book, as its universal adoption is ample proof of the excellent method on which it is based.

Well, what do we find on examining Ollendorf's work? He gives model sentences with their meaning. But the practical author, not deeming this sufficient, gives also careful explanations of their grammatical construction, which he illustrates with numerous examples. In the exercises annexed to each lesson, he affords the pupils ample opportunity for practice, and, in accordance with the maxim '*Practice makes perfect*,' he advises both masters and pupils to form and translate as many sentences as possible.

The objection which is very justly raised against Ollendorf's method, that it is merely a mechanical translation exercise, can easily be removed by digressing in the verbal practice from the original course: The master reading the questions in French, requesting

the pupils to return answers of their own invention.

Another method, equally good, if not superior, to Ollendorf's, but more difficult in its practical application to both masters and pupils, is that recommended by Dr. Robertson, Gaspey, Havet, and others. It is based on pieces of prose on which the pupils are questioned after having been translated. They are taught to adopt portions of these model pieces in their answers, and thus form new sentences with the materials the lessons furnish.

This method, which is not a mere translation exercise, and, consequently, not so mechanical in its application, can be easily connected with the reading lesson. It is more difficult to the pupils, especially at the beginning; but, as it calls their intellectual powers more into practice, it is more useful. As it is a great deal more difficult and troublesome to the teacher, and as he is forced to rely on his own inventive powers, it can only be worked well by an industrious, active, and clever teacher.

The following observations will be very

useful to teachers who wish to make use of this method.

The questions even at the very beginning are put in French, and, in order that they may at once be understood, they must be strictly confined to the wording of the reading lesson. At the commencement, therefore, they can only refer to parts of the sentences, as subject, verb, adverb, object, etc. The answers must always form whole sentences. The narrow compass within which questioning is kept at first, is to be gradually enlarged in accordance with the progress of the pupils. This is done by changing the singular to the plural, and *vice versâ*, the moods and tenses of the verbs, the negative form to the affirmative, by converting direct into oblique oration; and, finally, by asking the why and wherefore of things and actions occurring in the sentences. Practical illustrations of this method are found in Havet's 'Reading Lessons.'

From these scanty observations it will be apparent what varied practice may be afforded by a sympathising, painstaking, and clever teacher in connection with the reading-lesson.

Of course, the *out-of-lesson practice*, as

indicated under '*Conversational Exercises*' in the first course, is not to be neglected.

In this manner the pupils not only learn, without much trouble, idiomatic turns and peculiarities of the French language, but also to handle and change sentences so as to make them useful for practical purposes.

THIRD COURSE.

THE pupils begin now to reap the fruits of their exertions during the two first courses; and, as conversation and composition are now the two principal objects in view, this may fitly be called that of *Conversation* and *Composition.*

READING.

READING is still to be continued, but it takes now a different course from that followed in the preceding stage. The pupils prepare their lessons with the aid of the dictionary. The master's task is, therefore, limited to

hearing the pupils translate, perhaps, only passages which may be supposed not to be perfectly understood. Of course the lesson is always read through from beginning to end.

The study of the synonymies is to be introduced, and their explanation given now in French.

Ex. 1. *Les côtes et rivages* sont plus ou moins étendus; les côtes le sont plus que les rivages. La mer, les fleuves, les grandes rivières ont des *rivages;* la mer seul a des côtes. Les rivières, les ruisseaux et toutes les caux courantes ont des *rives.* Toutes les eaux depuis la mer jusqu' à la fontaine ont des *bords.*

Ex. 2. *On apprend* d'un maître; *on s'instruit* soi-même.

Ex. 3. *Demeurer* se dit par rapport au lieu que l'on habite; *loger*, par rapport à l'edifice. Ainsi on dit: Je demeure à Londres—je loge à l'hotel du Nord—je loge en hôtel garni.

Reading also affords many opportunities for repetition of grammatical rules.

A very important part of the grammar,

viz., '*the gender of French nouns*,' can be taught very successfully with reading. To facilitate this troublesome task, a good many grammarians have given treatises on the subject; but, unfortunately, the rules laid down in them are liable to numberless exceptions. With the same intent, W. R. Goodluck published, some time ago, a little book entitled 'The French Genders Taught in Six Fables,' a very elaborate work, though deficient and incomplete in many respects. A German, A. Langenscheidt, of Berlin, has published a similar work, which bears the stamp of more accuracy and care.

But even with the above-mentioned works, a perfect knowledge of the subject is always a work of time. Without intending to discard these elaborate essays, I think that a complete knowledge of the French genders may be more surely and insensibly acquired by reading with attention. I must also refer the reader to the concluding remarks on '*Repetition and Hearing of the Lessons*' (First Course).

Certain general rules are of important practical value, such as :

er, masc.	ending.	Exception : La mer, la cuiller.
oir	„	No except.
eux	„	No except.
aine, fem.	ending.	Exception : Le domaine, Maine.
onte	„	Exception : Le Conte.

Such and similar rules must be continually repeated, and the pupil's attention drawn to them when reading; their principal exceptions must also be continually recalled to the memory.

GRAMMAR.

THE systematic study of the grammatical rules as practised in the preceding stage is now abandoned, and an irregular plan, similar to that advised in the First Course, may be adopted, as reading and composition afford plenty of opportunities for the repetition of the grammar. However, some time must be devoted to certain portions which are so difficult that they require being treated with exceptional care and attention, such as :

the use of imparfait and passé defini, the employment of the subjunctive mood, the government of the verbs, etc.

COMPOSITION.

As a good preparation or introduction to the difficult task of writing in French, 'The Book of Versions, or Guide to French Translation,' by Cherpilloud,* may be recommended. These translations can, however, only be useful and beneficial, if they are executed in accordance with the instructions of the author, which he has at great length laid down in the preface to his book. The pieces given in the book are not only to be translated on paper, but, after having been carefully corrected, also orally, till the pupils can do so without experiencing any difficulty whatever.

There are also similar books by Otto and Havet, which are equally useful.

As soon as possible, however, the pupils must begin to write on given themes, which, at the commencement of the practice, ought to be prepared with great care, under the assistance of the master. The writing of letters must also be practised. The task will be at first a rather difficult one to the pupils. But however poor their first productions may turn out, and however great the difficulties they experience may be, let them but persevere courageously—'ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte'—they will soon learn to do better, the difficulties will gradually become less, until, in the end, they will find their task easy and interesting.

The correction of these themes is now done in class, as pointed out in the First Course.

CONVERSATION.

If the pupils have been carefully taught in the two preceding stages, they cannot experience great difficulties in practising free conversation. However, it is not advisable to adopt an irregular course; on the contrary, a settled, definite plan is a very essential condition to carry the practice to a successful end. The book to be used is the 'Handbook of French Vocabulary,' edited, from the German of Dr. Carl Ploetze, by Th. K. Arnold, M.A. This book gives everything that is necessary to fill up those gaps that may have been left in the acquisition of vocables, and supplies abundant material for conversation and composition.

Much attention is to be paid to accustom the pupils to express their thoughts in as simple and short a form as possible. The plainer the combination, and the steadier the mind is in forming sentences, the easier will be the task of the tongue in executing the commands of the brain.

CONCLUSION.

ADVICE TO ADULT STUDENTS.

THE course which I have sketched out in this little book is especially intended for the use of schools where the study of modern languages is begun at an early age, and, therefore, a longer time is allowed for their acquisition.

Adults will, of course, acquire a foreign language in a much shorter time. A youth, spending over it a couple of hours every day in earnest work, may, according to his abilities, become a good French scholar in two or three years. But this result can only be arrived at by the student applying himself to his task every day, and with conscientious, unceasing assiduity. He must not allow pleasure to interfere with his work, and not sit down to rest until the lesson of the day is done. If he cannot muster sufficient energy to set about his task in this manner, he had better leave it alone, as the result of his

spasmodic efforts will only amount to a waste of money and time.

'*For the great secret of successful study is conscientious and uninterrupted application.*' It is truly astonishing what may be accomplished by close application, and how unprofitably time is employed by indifference to one's studies.

The study in classes yields but very rarely favourable results, because they are generally composed of very incongruous materials, which preclude harmonious working. Winter evening-classes are a delusion and a snare, where a youth—like an infant in the 'Kindergarten'—is kept out of mischief for a few shillings. However, a class of a few friends working harmoniously together, cannot be objected to; on the contrary, if they occupy the same lodgings, they can prepare their lessons together, and a little rivalry is a useful stimulus. But suppose even the student be compelled to take private lessons, I daresay he can always get a good master at a guinea and a half per quarter, once a week; and if he cannot afford to pay for two lessons, which is the most he would want, he must

make up the deficiency by his own industry. He must always bear in mind that, '*though the lesson is an important factor, the most important by far to lead to success are his own industry and determination to accomplish his task under any circumstances.*'

On the whole, in teaching adults, the same course is taken as that followed in the schools; of course, adults do not require to be instructed with the minuteness that is indispensable with children. For the preparatory course, Ploetze's and Havet's First Courses may be recommended. In the two remaining stages, the books recommended for use at school will be sufficient.

THE END.

BILLING AND SONS, PRINTERS, GUILDFORD, SURREY.

IN PREPARATION.

A TABLE OF THE ENDINGS

OF THE

FOUR REGULAR CONJUGATIONS,

AS WELL AS THAT OF THE

PURE TERMINATIONS OF FRENCH VERBS,

for the use of Pupils, and with Instructions how to use it.

A TABLE

OF THE

Masculine and Feminine Endings

OF FRENCH NOUNS

and their Principal Exceptions.